CONGAREE SKETCHES

BY E. C. L. ADAMS

Stories of Negro life in Heaven, Hell, and the Congaree swamps way down in South Carolina. Stories which you will not easily forget, full of humor yet not always so comic after all.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

PAUL GREEN

The University Press takes the keenest pleasure in introducing these remarkable stories and sketches to the reading public. Dr. Adams should take his place alongside the greatest tellers of Negro stories. G. C. Taylor says, "Dr. Adams is not guilty of exploitation. One finds in *Congaree Sketches* no manipulation, no pulling of the strings for sensational or comic purposes. He never, as so many do, takes a patronizing point of view toward the Negro; never makes him the butt for the low comedy laughter of the whites. Nor does he idealize him for the sake of sentimentalizing. He lets the Negro speak for himself. I know of no more faithful representation of actual Negro nature with all of its infinite variety of pathos, tragedy, and humor. He has caught and held in these sketches a fast vanishing phase of the Negro psychology, emotion, and thought."

CONGAREE SKETCHES

EDWARD C. L. ADAMS

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CONGAREE SKETCHES

SCENES FROM NEGRO LIFE IN THE SWAMPS OF THE CONGAREE AND TALES BY TAD AND SCIP OF HEAVEN AND HELL WITH OTHER MISCELLANY.

BY EDWARD C. L. ADAMS
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
PAUL GREEN.

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CONTENTS

	Introduction (By Paul Green)	vii
I.	The Big Swamps of the Congaree	1
II.	The Hopkins Nigger	2
III.	Jonas	4
IV.	A Freshet on the Congaree	5
V.	Hell Fire	7
VI.	The Rattlesnake	10
VII.	Sunning on the Golden Stairs	11
VIII.	Judge Fool-Bird	12
IX.	Old Sister	13
X.	Old Sister's Friends	17
XI.	Old Sister in Heaven	21
XII.	Old Sister in Hell	25
XIII.	The Settin' Up	29
XIV.	The Little Old Man on the Gray Mule	30
XV.	The Lake of the Dead	33
XVI.	Aunt Dinah's Cat	35
XVII.	Murder vs. Liquor	36
XVIII.	Old Dictodemus	39
XIX.	Jeff's Funeral Sermon	41
XX.	Fragment of a Negro Sermon	45
XXI.	His Day Is Done	47
XXII.	Ole Man Rogan	49
XXIII.	Big Charleston	51
XXIV.	The Yellow Crane	56
XXV.	White Folks is White Folks	60
XXVI.	Wild Goose Nest	62
XXVII.	Transmigration	65
XXVIII.	Belton's Spirit	68
XXIX.	The Animal Court	69

XXX.	Ole Man Tooga's Chile (A Tale of the Chain Gang)	71
XXXI.	Fine My Chile	74
XXXII.	Purtty Little Folks	76
XXXIII.	The Falling Star	77
XXXIV.	Jay-Birds	78
XXXV.	Jack-Ma-Lantern	79
XXXVI.	Ole Man Rouse	81
XXXVII.	If You Want to Find Jesus	83
XXXVIII.	The Ghosts of Elm Savannah	84
XXXIX.	The Crow	86
XL.	Primus	87
XLI.	Jumping-Gut	88
XLII.	Cazenova	90
XLIII.	Spirit Dogs and Barking Snakes	91
XLIV.	Death Owl	92
XLV.	De Law Got Simon	94
XLVI.	A Fool Nigger	95
XLVII.	The Two Ducks	96
XLVIII.	The Mule and the Ox	97
XLIX.	That Quart Kept on Beckoning Me	98
L.	Don't Sturb a Houn'	100
LI.	Don't You Play Wid Married Wimmens	101
LII.	Tad's Advice to His Son	102
LIII.	Old Sister's Advice to Her Daughter	104
LIV.	Jesus had Trouble	105
	Word List	110

INTRODUCTION

In 1906 when Atlanta was harrying its Negro citizens W. E. B. DuBois sent out a prayer to God:

> Bewildered we are, and passion-tost, mad with the madness of a mobbed and mocked and murdered people; straining at the arm-posts of Thy Throne, we raise our shackled hands and charge Thee, God, by the bones of our stolen fathers, by the tears of our dead mothers, by the very blood of Thy crucified Christ: *What meaneth this?* Tell us the Plan; give us the Sign!

And then, receiving no answer from God, he bows his head:

> Amen! Welcome dark sleep!

Years ago Booker T. Washington in many a sane address and written page sent his prayer out, not to God but to his fellow-man, and it became a plea and a command, a program of action rather than a prayer:

> Freedom can never be given, it must be purchased. . . . The race, like the individual, that makes itself indispensable, has solved most of its problems. . . . As a race there are two things we must learn to do, one is to put brains into the common occupations of life, and the other is to dignify common labor. . . . The opportunity to earn a dollar in a factory just now is worth infinitely more than the opportunity to spend a dollar in the opera house.

Both DuBois and Washington have been leaders in the Negro race—the one radical, passionate and poetic; the other temperate, careful and pragmatic. DuBois like Washington has linked himself with all sorts of movements and sociological activities for the dispensing of justice and freedom to the colored man. His love of humanity has forced it on him. His magazine *The Crisis,* in vivid contrast to *The Tuskegee Messenger,* has preached vials of wrath and every kind of woe at the spectacle of the Negro's compulsory degradation. But despite all this, despite the Atlanta Conference, the Studies of Negro Problems, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and most of his books, I for one think of Dr. DuBois as more the artist than the historian, sociologist and reformer. Unlike Washington, he is by instinct and secret practice more interested in the dollar spent in the opera house than the dollar earned in the factory. And this interest flowing forth in a poetic strain, permeates all of his writings, carries along his hatred of injustice, love for the lowly, and suffering with the oppressed, in an insistent rhythmic beat:

> How many heartfuls of sorrow shall balance a bushel of wheat? How hard a thing is life to the lowly, and yet how human and real! And all this life of love and strife and failure—is it the twilight of nightfall or the flush of some faint-dawning day? Thus sadly musing, I rode to

Nashville in the Jim Crow car. . . . I have seen a land right merry with the sun, where children sing, and rolling hills lie like passioned women wanton with harvest. And there in the King's Highway sat and sits a figure veiled and bowed, by which the traveler's footsteps hasten as they go. On the tainted air broods fear. Three centuries' thought has been the raising and unveiling of that bowed human heart.

And this poetic comprehension of life, this grasp of right and truth in the abstract, something to be fought for until it is made actual, has established Du-Bois as the leader of that increasing group of Negro radicals, poets, and artists who until recently were nothing in numbers compared to the followers of Washington's policies. For grouped with Washington have been most of the Negro educational and industrial institutions, though of course many of them with a difference. Washington lived to see his methods vindicated and on the way to mass fulfilment, until today the story is an epic one in the concerted movement of black and white working for the salvation of the Negro people, educationally, economically —in every practical way. Southern states are appropriating money for Negro organizations, school buildings, asylums, welfare departments, charitable homes. And in many sections, Durham, North Carolina, for instance, the Negro himself is building out and along his own triumphant way. More and more the courts are coming to view the Negro as a human being ca-

pable of responding to justice before the law. In short, in answer to both Washington and DuBois the reformer and to other self-evident forces, here at the end of this century's first quarter the United States is awakening to the fact that the destiny of the Negro is its destiny, that black and white are inextricably mingled in blood and bone and intention, and that as the white man fails the Negro fails and as the Negro rises the white man rises.

And this is the only conclusion to awake to, seeing that for two hundred years both white and black have assimilated a mutual tradition and practiced approximately the same social conceptions in their daily life. Actually and absolutely it makes little difference to the ultimate answer if today the Negro is —to use a homely picture — in the ditch doing the dirty digging and the white man on the bank directing it. Simply because human beings are concerned, a rearrangement will follow. One of three things always happens and always will. Tomorrow either both will be in the ditch, or both will be on the bank, or the Negro will be on the bank and the white man in the ditch. And this mutual orientation goes on forever. For being human means, doesn't it, that there is a constant give and take going between, and that finally one of the above figurative conclusions will become real?

Then why bother about it if it works its own way? Simply because humanity can consciously alleviate

individual confusion and despair and it is its holy duty to do so. I mean that the process of salvation—out of the mire to dry land—can be helped or hindered. And yet not absolutely. So far as I can see—if I may be platitudinous once more—human nature provides its own mysterious power for rearrangement and cannot be kept from it until all concerned are dead. And this is the rub that should make willing martyrs of us all in the cause of sympathy and good-will—so many of those concerned die in the curse when you and I might have lifted it. Yes, we do owe it to ourselves, to the dead and those to die to aid in this reorientation. And we are aiding, but not yet enough. The negro is crawling out of his ditch to stand on the bank with the white man. And the white man is reaching a hand to pull him up: but let it be a stronger hand and one that reaches farther than before. It may be that they will stand in their separate place apart, but I doubt it. They have too much in common not to pass a word with one another after the gesture of brotherhood has been made. And in the light of such benefits to hand I can see no sense in the talk of segregation, back to Africa, and the like, which many of our politicians and faddistic souls enjoy. It all seems beside the point. Even the movement going the rounds among some of the Negroes themselves for a separate racial culture and tradition, exemplified, say, in their upturning of

native African art, likewise looks suspicious and outside the concrete demands of the case. Of course all such endeavors in uncovering racial heritage are valuable in establishing a point of view for growth and development. It is the familiar historical mind and method at work and is good for what it is, but not for any autonymity of the race as such. That can never be and we might as well recognize it. What can be and will be is a larger humanizing of the whole, an Americanizing, if you will. And it is most significant, I think, that black and white and a thousand unconscious forces are at work for this larger humanity.

And so what Booker T. Washington dreamed and worked for has come to pass beyond his dream and work. It is apparent everywhere. Its story is writ large. But the fulfilment of those vague and impractical heartsick yearnings, vision and part of DuBois the poet and theorist, has not been so apparent. And yet it is becoming apparent and he is living to see himself vindicated. He is living to see the Negro's artistic genius recognized the world over—in that great creation the Spiritual. In folklore, in song, dance, in drama, fiction, in every art he is seeing the Negro coming to his own hearthstone. For more than a generation he has pleaded for the beneficence of a just judgment to fall upon the Negro as a people. In 1906 he was in confusion and despair:

Our voices sink in silence and in night.
Hear us, good Lord!
In night, O God, of a godless land!
Amen!

And now in the year 1927 he need no longer—though there's a worldful to do—talk of silence and the night. The sweet judgment of charity and humanity is becoming his. And all is not lost to the powers of woe. For now the Negro is upon his way and the white man with him—both going together, brothers in the common cause of self-expressiveness. DuBois has not directly answered his own prayer, has not directly and concretely laid the pattern of light upon his chaos. Others are doing it for him. The younger Negro minds, artists, poets, doers of the word, and the white man, hundreds of white men, North, East, South, West— all are talking and doing, saying forward and somewhere. The younger Negro of today says of himself and says it with philosophic dispassionateness (for having struggled through to thought, he knows something now of those deep, almost impersonal currents behind most of our immediate appearances—currents which can and do make havoc of narrow loyalties, fastened creeds, and social ways)—the younger Negro says of himself and I applaud him:

I too sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes.
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong,

Tomorrow
I'll sit at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen"
Then.

Besides, they'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed—

I too am America.

He too is America. For long and long we have known him as useful, have drawn him to us, have pulled the fruits of labor from his hands. Today—and certainly tomorrow—we are seeing him as interesting, beautiful, and real among us—something enriching and worth enlightened cherishing. He is seeing it too, and has seen it longer than we might think. Now the seeing nears completeness and *it* will be. And what? A wider humanity, a deeper bond of brotherhood, a more healthy individual life and a more significant nation; not a utopia, not satis-

faction, but a more splendid endeavor for all in this the middle of our toilsome way. And the young Negro poet sings it, foretells it:

> We have tomorrow
> Bright before us
> Like a flame
>
> Yesterday, a night-gone thing
> A sundown name
>
> And dawn today
> Broad arch above the road we came,
> We march.

And as any sane economist or sociologist welcomes the economic growth of the Negro so do I—who have nothing to lose but all to gain—welcome this recent exuberant outburst of the Negro in art and literature. And like his educational and industrial activities this so-called art renaissance of the black man is no fad, though many would have us believe so. True it has its faddistic elements, but the heart of the matter is as sound as a people's life. It must be, since for generations a subtle process of folk creations, assimilations and quiet pervadings has gone on, a part of the very nature of our existence—creating new products which in turn created others. And this process has been aided by the art of the white man, intermittently so perhaps, and by the almost unconscious folk art of the Negro, until now the educated Negro like the

white man is looking down the long way he has come, seeing his life and his endeavors objectively and telling about them in the sophisticated symbols of art. He is collecting and moulding them and making them available for the enjoyment and experience of all alike. Who would not be thankful?

And so I am. I am thankful to know as fellow countrymen such men as DuBois, Roland Hayes, Paul Robeson, Countee Cullen, Alain Locke, Benjamin Brawley, James Weldon and J. Rosamond Johnson, Langston Hughes, Charles S. Johnson and dozens of others. I am thankful for all the many gifts of their race—their music and their song, and for their multitudious services, whether noble or ignoble. They are a magnificent people and nothing can keep them down. Why should we longer be inclined to foolishness and bend ears to the wind of too cheap expediency when a little forebearance and imagination can aid so vastly in the growing salvation of us all? And here I am not pleading for the Negro but for ourselves, the white man. For there is much, much worth the knowing and we're missing it, caught as we are in the lock-step of senseless conformity. It seems to me to be encouraging, in spite of the infinite scroll of negative cases, that since the difficulty and opportunity—for it is that—became ours there have been an increasing number of white people who have shared in the Negro's artistic as well as

his more practical gifts. Before and after Joel Chandler Harris the list is interesting and imposing, until more recently there seems to be as much, or more, activity on the part of white artists in Negro subjects as among the Negroes themselves. A few come to mind at once—T. S. Stribling, H. A. Shands, Clement Wood, Julia Peterkin, DuBose Heyward, Carl Van Vechten, Eugene O'Neill, Howard W. Odum, Ridgely Torrence, and many, many others. They too are seeing the value of the Negro as a vital part of our tradition and our future. And if I mistake not they are seeing him also in the simple but exacting terms of humanity.

And so I consider that Dr. E. C. L. Adams, a white physician of Columbia, South Carolina, has done us all a fine service in publishing these folk-tales, these Congaree Sketches of the lower Carolina Negroes. And I believe that those who read them will agree that not since the days of Joel Chandler Harris have they come upon anything fresher or more interesting. I doubt that Harris ever wrote a better tale than, say, Dr. Adam's sketch about the Hopkins nigger.

PAUL GREEN.

CHAPEL HILL, N. C.
April, 1927.

CONGAREE SKETCHES

I. THE BIG SWAMPS OF THE CONGAREE

Tad: Gentlemens, how is you-all?

Voice: Howdy! how you been?

Second Voice: Tolerable.

Tad: I been down in de big swamps on de Congaree.

Voice: Tell us, brother?

Tad: I been down to de Congaree in de big swamps, where de trees is tall an' de moss long an' gray, where de Bullace grow, an' where I hear de tune of de bird in de mornin'; down wey de wild turkey gobbles, way down on de Congaree; wey God's mornin' leads to de devil's night; down on de river, where night make her sign, where owls on a dead limb talks of de dead, talks wid de dead and laughs like de dead, way down in de big swamps of de Congaree; down where de blunt-tailed moccasin crawls in de grass, where de air is stink wid he smell; where de water is green, where de worms is spewed out of de groun', where de groun' is mud, where de trees sweat like a man; down in de home of de varmint an' bugs, down in de slick yallow mud, de black mud an' de brown, way down in de big swamps of de Congaree; down in de land of pizen, where de yallow-fly sting, in de home of de fever an' wey death is de king. Dat wey I been, down in de big swamps. Down in de land of mosquito, way down in de big swamps, down on de Congaree.

II. THE HOPKINS NIGGER

"Is any of you niggers ever heared the tale 'bout the Hopkins nigger? One time a Hopkins nigger died and atter he dead he clumb up that long hill what lead to heben. When he got to de top he knock on de door wid he hat in he han', jest like a nigger, persisely like a nigger. En ole Peter cracked de door an' peep out an' say, 'who dar?' and de nigger say he er Hopkins nigger, like dat been sumpen great, an' ole Peter say he 'ain't like no Hopkins nigger nohow. Wait here, an' I'll fine out can you come in,' en he closed de door an' he left de nigger standin' dere an' atter while he come back and he open de door and tell de nigger he can come in. Time dat nigger hit heben he hit it a throwin' them foots an' shouting. Peter walk up to him and say, 'Hole on, nigger, the Lord want to see you.' An atter he git the nigger quiet de Lord come up to de nigger an he fasten pair of pearley whings on him and guin him silver feathers and gold claws and a gold bill and he said, 'nigger, you is an angel, fly!' An' when de Lord say dat de nigger stretch hisself and flop he whing three or four times an' create a dust, den he riz up an' he fly an' he flewed and there never been seen such flyin' since heben been heben an' de Lord look on an' was 'stonished at de way dat nigger flew and he call Gabel and Michael to him and he say, 'go git dat nigger' and

dem white angels lit out atter dat nigger and dey flyed and dey flewed and dey ain't done nuttin. Dat nigger circled around heben like a buzzard. Atter while he got tired playing wid dem white angels and he lit on a dead snag and set dere pluckin' he feathers and running he bill down he long feathers in he whings. Atter while dem white angels come up dere an' suade him to go back wey de Lord and his Son was an' 'fore dey git dere dem buckra angel done plan a tonement. Ain't you see dat nigger done done. He got hot for de tonement. You know he been hot for it when he fuse a tater annudder nigger han' him, but he done done. De course of de tonement lay 'cross de west end of heben where two ole gate posts been stan' right in de course eber since heben been first build. Ain't you see dat nigger done done? An' when de tonement start a whole lot of buckra angels been put in an' dey put Gabel to one end of de line and dey put Michael to de udder end and dey put de tall angel in de middle by de nigger, and de Lord and his Son stood on a high hill and de Lord's Son guin de sign for de tonement to start. When dey start dat nigger flop along kind o' careless like, tryin' to suade dem buckra angels to light out. Atter while he fine out dey ain't doin' nuttin and he lit out hisself and Gabel and Michael and de tall angel helt dem young buckra angels down, so dey ain't none of dem gur git hurt, but dat nigger

lit out and he flyed and he flewed to such a rate he couldn't stop hisself and he flewed into dem gate-posts. Atter while de Lord and he Son and de white angels come up and dere lay de nigger, he pearley whings broke, he silver feathers scattered on de groun', he head twist one side and he gold claw curl up and de Lord look at him an' say, 'jest like a nigger, persisely like a nigger,' an' de las' time dat nigger been seen ole Peter have him in a wheel-barrow rollin' him down a hill on de back side of heben to de grand trash pile, and he was murmurin' and a mutterin'. This comes from bein' like a nigger.

"Jest like a nigger! Persisely like a nigger!"

III. JONAS

Voice: Way you been Scip?

Scip: I been to de trial.

Voice: Who trial?

Scip: Un' Fed boy, Jonas.

Voice: When dey guh finish?

Scip: Dey done finish.

Voice: Wha' dey do wid him?

Scip: You talk like a fool. Ax me what dey guh do wid him. Ain't I tell you dey try him? Ain't I tell you dey done finish try him? You axe me wha' dey do wid him. Ain't you know who set on de jury?

Voice: White folks.

Scip: Yes, white folks, and dat ain't all,—poor white folks, poor buckra, cracker, —ain't dat 'nuf? Dat what set on de jury.

Voice: But Jonas ain't do nuttin'.

Scip: Dat ain't make no difference. I done tell you who set on de jury.

Voice: Is he pa fret much?

Scip: No he ain't fret. He know dey ain't no nuse to fret. He raise he chillun right and he ain't fret. He got sense. He know wha' guh be, guh be, en he ain't fret.

IV. A FRESHET ON THE CONGAREE

Leck: Gentlemens!

Voice: Sorter slow. Wuh's de time, Ber Leck?

Leck: Time ain't so much.

Voice: Wey you come from?

Leck: Jes come out of dc Congaree swamp.

Voice: How come time ain't so much, Ber Leck?

Leck: Jes come out de Congaree swamp and de ole river sho' is ragin'. I never is seen a wusser freshet. De logs spin 'round a hundred feet long and roarin' 'gainst de big trees like dey guh tear de heart out de earth wey de go,—varmints a settin' on limbs and ridin' on logs, and I seen er drove er cow swimmin'. Each one had a head a restin' on de tail of de other cow. Den de call come and de first cow sink and all de other cows sink. After while I see

'em whirlin' over and over. Sometime day feets in de air, sometime dey horns, and de river been mess up de cows' horns and foots and it th'owed 'em every which er way, and I see hog cut dey own throats tryin' to swim out of dis torment and de river, and it look like God Almighty must a wrop he arm 'round de flood and whirl it back in He anger. Every which er way I look I see 'struction. I see sturgeon tangle up in a wire fence and de birds quit singin' and went to hollerin', and I look down on de yaller water and I see wey buzzard cast his shadow. Everywhere I look I see buzzard. I been prayin' to God to help me and I been fightin' de angry waters and 'struction been rollin' at me and I been lookin' death in de face. And God save me dis time, and I reckon I'll stay 'way from de big swamp and try and don't do nothin' to defy Him.

Brother, when de Congaree gits riled, it mighty nigh look like Jesus hisself forgits de poor critters, it look like he stan' back and give de devil a chance to do he do. And if your heart ain't right, my brother, de big swamps will 'stroy it. Dey 'stroy your body and if dey ain't 'stroy it, look like dey' 'stroy your soul.

Voice: Did you hear Ber Leck? He ain't tell no lie. I see a heap of mens come out de big swamps. If dey stay dere long enough, when dey come out, dey look more like beasts or varmints dan dey does like

mens. Brother, God ain't make dem swamps for mens. Dey de home of de devil, de home of 'struction; dey de home of serpents, de home of buzzards, and if you put mens in dem swamps, de only way dey can live is to be like de critters dat live dere, and take on dere ways. Yes, my brother, stay 'way from de big swamps.

V. HELL FIRE

Scip: Is you hear 'bout dat Congaree nigger wuh act so miserable in this worl', and have so much weeked ways an' how he dead, and slip down dat long hill into hell, an' how he act when de devil start puttin' de fire to 'im?

Voice: Tell we, Bur Scip.

Scip: Well, one time dey been a Congaree nigger an' he went on terrible in this worl'. He cuss, an' steal, an' make game at God's work, an' do everything de Bible say he ain't mus' do. He act like he been one of de devil's own chillun. When he dead he hit dat broad steep road dat leads to hell, an' it been slick as axle grease, it been used so much. Time dat nigger hit it, he hit it slippin' an' scramblin' an' tryin' to git back, but he ain' doin' nothin'. He was slidin' at such a rate till he was smokin' 'fore he git half way down, but dat little heat ain' nothin' to wuh he goin' git. The gates of hell been wide open, look like de openin' to a railroad tunnel, an' smoke an' fire was

jumpin' out of it every minute. 'Twus a terrible lookin' place, an' when dat nigger hit hell he hit it so hard he parted de flames. He cut a road through dat fire for about two mile, an' everywhere he looked he see folks from Congaree. White folks an' niggers, all both of them, an' all lined up 'side of de road, an' all un'um war smokin'. Dey was jumpin' 'round' ever minute, look like every time dey get settled a new fire would bus' out. Dere was mens, a plenty of them, an' Jesus! De wimmens! Hell was jam full of them. Dat nigger when he did git on he foots clam up on a rock an' started lookin' aroun' when de old devil come up to him an' axed him wey he come f'um. An' he say, he a Congaree nigger. Time he say it de devil git so close to him he can smell de burnin' hair on 'im. He git close to de nigger, an' look in he face wid he red eye, an' he nose look like a big red hot fish hook. He had horns on 'im wuss dan a cow, an' he tail look like it war some kind of a red hot snake, an' he switchin' it ever which a way, an' everything he tech with it he raised a blister. He had foots like a goat but dey was diff'unt, an' was scortched from jumpin' 'roun' on red hot rock. When de devil come up to dat nigger an' look down in he face dat nigger act just like a 'ceitful Congaree nigger. He say, 'Boss, you sure God is a good-lookin' man.' Time he say it de devil start grinnin' an' laughin' an' winkin' he eye at he chillun', makin' sign to 'um, an'

he says to de nigger 'You think hell a hot place, but I guh show you wuh a hot fire is, 'cause I got back logs in here an' brush-heaps I just been savin' for you. I always has trouble wid dem low down Congaree nigger, an' I is had a heap of experience wid 'em, 'cause hell is full of 'um.' Well suh, he had dat nigger in a sweat. Ever time dat nigger clam up on a safe lookin' place fire an' smoke would start creepin' out f'um somewhere, an' de nigger git kiner onrestless, at first, but atter while he started to takin' long steps, skippin' 'roun', an' jumpin'. Look like he was cuttin' the buck. You know hell ain' no lonesome place. But dat nigger been so busy he ain' had time to make compersation wid nobody. De big Devil sho' is a busy man, but he got plenty of help, an' 'em chillun of his'n he sho' is raisin' 'um in he own way. He called some un 'um, an' he tell 'um to pay particular attention to de Congaree nigger, like he think so much on 'im he ain't want to neglect 'im. Great God, dat nigger was havin' a hot time. De first part of de time he spend hoppin' 'roun'. Den he step on he toe, an' he jump up an' down, but dem chillun ain't luh 'im res' while dey Daddy set up dere on a high red hot rock an' laugh like he guh kill he' self, an' egg 'um on. He say he always have a Circus every time anybody come f'um Congaree. He say it one time he ain' grudge nusin' a little extra fire kaze Congaree furnish hell wid all de clowns an' animals

too an' only pleasure he 'low 'um in hell is to 'low he subjects to see how de sinners f'um Congaree, white folks an' niggers, act when dey is gittin' broke in, an' he say dey sho' ain't fit fer nothen' but hell. He say he sho' is wase' up a lot of hell fire on all both un 'em, an' been doin' it ever since dey been a Hell. Dat is one of he main business. Well, suh, dem chillun had dat nigger stretched. He was jumpin' ditches an' canals an' tearin' theu red hot briar patches like he ain't never done nothen else an' dem chillun was stretched out behind him like a pack of houn' dogs atter a rabbit. Dey was runnin' at such a rate till Hell ain' been nothen but one big dus' cloud of sparks. He passed de place where Dives were an' he seen Annias, an' de high Priest, but he ain't stop to axe 'um no questions. He look like he ain' goin' have nothen to do wid compersation. He ain't run 'roun' nothen. He jumpin' 'cross everything. He cleared ever obstacle in he path an' de last time he been seen he been makin' for de big Gulf an' he look like he guh tackle dat.

VI. THE RATTLESNAKE

Tad: Spencer, is you hear 'bout dat big rattlesnake back in slavery-time?

Spencer: I ain't know what you talk 'bout, Tad?

Tad: You know de white folks had a chile, a little chile, 'bout four or five years old, an' ever day

at dinner time, 'fore dinner was over, dat chile take he dinner an' go out de house an' set down on a pile of rock out in de yard. He do it ever day, an' one day dere was a ole Uncle July say he curious, an' he watch dat chile, an' he say he see de chile go out in de yard an' climb up on pile of rock, an' he see de chile take a piece of bread in he han' an' put in he mout' an' bite it, den put it down side him an' rub an' pat, jist like he rubbin' an' pattin' somethin'. Ole man July he say he get a little closer an' he seen a rattle-snake come out of a hole in de rock an' he put he head up dat high,—stick he head out 'bout a foot, just sway back an' forth, an' he head been wide as a man han', an' rusty, an' he little eye been shinin' an' he poke he tongue out, jist lick it out, and the chile put another piece of bread in he mout', an' bite it, den he put he han' back down 'side of him, an' dat snake done take it and eat it out of he han'. An Ole July said he so scared he mighty nigh faint, lookin' at dat chile an' at dat snake. An' he went in de house an' tell de people in de house 'bout it an' fore dey got out dere dat snake done gone an' de chile settin' dere on the rocks by hisself.

VII. SUNNING ON THE GOLDEN STAIRS

Sam: Is you hear wuh sa preacher say how de nigger is guh prosper? He say dey is guh be great rulers an' big bosses, dat heben is full on 'em an' God

got 'em crowded 'roun' de throne an' nigger angels is flyin' ever which a way an' dey got great 'thority. Dey settin' 'roun' de foot-stool an' roostin' all 'round on de bannisters an' sunnen dey self on de golden stairs.

Scip: Yes, Brother, I hear him. I ain't pay too much 'tension to da preacher. Dat ain't nuthen but nigger talk. If niggers in heben act like dey act in dis worl' dey sure got heben ruint up.

Jube: They must be ain't no white folks dere.

Sam: Wuh make?

Jube: You know white folks ain't go hab niggers sunnen dey self on de stairs an' roostin' on de bannisters.

Scip: Brother, you spoke. God ain guh have a passel of niggers messen up in he business. Niggers got dey place an' dat ain't on top. Has you ever see a tumble bug roll he load? He ain't never satisfy wid it any way he got it. He always try to roll up a hill. He gits up a piece and then he roll down again, 'en that's a nigger.

VIII. JUDGE FOOL-BIRD

Perk: I been over to see de Jedge pass on Noah.

Voice: Wha' Noah do?

Perk: He been in ole man Hall Store, an' he say 'God-dam' to a nigger standin' dere, an' ole man Hall say he a Christian gentleman an' don' 'low no per-

fanity in he place of business—'git out!' An' Noah say, he ain't mean no harm, an' he walk out an' cross de big road. Atter while ole man Hall walk out an' follow him up an' he walk up to Noah an' bus' him over de head wid er axe halve an' beat him up an' de Police 'rest both 'un 'em, an' Jedge Foolbird axe ole man Hall what de nigger do when he follow him up and ole man Hall say 'He ain't do nuthin', but he look like he goin' say sumpen,' and Jedge Foolbird fined Noah one hunnerd dollahs.

Voice: What did he do wid ole man Hall?

Perk: He fine him fi' dollahs.

Voice: 'Fore God! What make he fine ole man Hall fi' dollahs? Ain't he white folks?

Perk: Jedge Foolbird is de law, an' he goin' do what he goin' do. He de law, and de law is de law.

IX. OLD SISTER

Bruser: Dey show is been a turn-over down to de old street; every kind er mix-up, niggers fighten every which a way.

Tad: Wuh de matter ail em?

Bruser: Ole Sister start sompen.

Scip: Dat's wha Ole Sister good for. Carrying news and putten pizen out.

Bruser: She done put de pizen out up de street, den she pass on she look dat satisfy.

Scip: Pass on to put pizen out some wey else.

Tad: You ain't think all dat 'bout Ole Sister, is you? She look so Christian. Ain't I see her in church and meeten look like she always prayen and beggen God to forgive poor sinners.

Scip: She tongue forked just like a snake, one half on it drips prayers and tother half turns loose ruination, and den she talk so sweet 'bout God and how she give agvice and do everything she kin do to save her friend.

Voice: She wouldn't live long if she ain't been able to ring de heart strings loose from some er dem people she say she friend to, I done watch Ole Sister.

Scip: Ole Sister's business is other folks' business; she are a upright 'oman; she ain't never do no wrong; she know how to pray in de public place.

Voice: Dey tells me it was folks like Ole Sister 'casion Christ to be crucify.

Scip: Well, Christ pick out two thieves to go wid him, you ain't see no Ole Sisters hanging on de cross wid Him.

Voice: Wuh you reckon he do dat for? You think he ain't been able to die right if he had anything wusser than them thieves?

Scip: I ain't say nothin' 'bout that.

Tad: I reckon she so satisfy, she rub she self 'bout de way she and God live.

Tad: Ole Man Daniel tell we dat way back in slavery time dere been a nigger dey call him Gabel.

He say Gabel been a kind man, double jinted and soft talking; everybody come to Gabel when 'struction start. He ain't luh no man beat he wife, ef de 'oman come to him for pertection. He pertect everything in trouble, mens and womens, but other times he ain't take nothing to do wid nobody. He were always a peace-maker, less some-body push him too far, and he ain't have to larn many un em. Ole man Daniel say Gabel been courtin' a pritty gal, and one day one ur dem ole sister spile her name, and run to her wid all kind er tales 'bout herself, and run to she friends and tells tales to everybody, she just strew dat little innocent gal's name, and claim she only talkin' in friendship, but she kept on talkin' and Gabel mighty nigh loss he mind, he fret so. Atter while dey torment de little gal so till one day she swallow a handful of bottle glass, and Ole Sister had her time moanin' at de settin' up and de funeral, she walk 'round lookin' as pious as a buzzard hoppin' 'round a carcass.

Voice: Hell must be full of Ole Sisters.

Scip: Dey got a particular pen in hell for em, and when a sinner is too weeked, dey throws him in de pen wid dem ole sisters, and dey picks de smoke off he bones and chats 'round him like a bunch of blackbirds.

Voice: Hell must be a bad place.

Scip: Brother, you know hell is a bad place when dey got generations of ole sisters pen up together, for de punishment of poor sinners.

Voice: It must be worse than bad, de fire is wusser nuff.

Another Voice: Dat must be de bottomless pit I hear so much talk 'bout wey all dem ole sister.

Tad: I reckon we better pray.

Bruser: Who dat comin' yonder?

Voice: Dat's Ole Sister now.

Several Voices: We best be leffen.

Tad: Less we pray.

Scip: Set still, brothers, prayin' and leffen neither one guine to stop Ole Sister's tongue. Set still, brothers, and take your honey and pizen now. Dey is only one way out and dat's ter cut your thoat from year to year, and ef you do dat, it will be Ole Sister's pleasure, all you do is to fill Ole Sister's pizen sack again and start her fresh on her road of 'struction. Set still, she only talks to her friends 'bout her friends, she is a good ooman, she prays and shouts, she got two worlds, dis world and hell and she mighty nigh done turn dis world into hell, it's wusser dan hell sometimes.

Tad: Less we pray.

Scip: I done tell you prayin' ain't guh help you wid Ole Sister, wey dey is most prayin' dere is most Ole Sister. Set still and let de ole moccasin whisper in your year.

Ole Sister: Bothers, how is you?

Several Voices: How is you Sister?

Tad: I just been sayin' ef everybody was like you, Sister, dis would be a good world to live in, but people is so weeked, ain't nobody can control em.

Voice: Ain't dat de truth Tad spoke?

Another Voice: Jesus knows.

Tad: Sister, what's de news?

Scip: Sister's heart is heavy, Tad, she try so hard to bring peace and good behavior. Sister too busy tryin' to save sinners to have news.

Ole Sister: Brother Scip, you knows my heart, it is weary wid tryin' to save people. I mighty nigh done talk my heart out geeing agvice to dat gal of Riah's. I talk to her and ain't never say a word 'bout her to nobody. She my friend and I wants to save her. I stand by my friends, and I sets example for dem.

Tad: Do Jesus, less we pray.

Voice: Amen.

Several Voices: Amen.

Tad: God loves Ole Sister.

Scip: Ole Sister are a blessed ooman.

X. OLD SISTER'S FRIENDS

Old Sister: Well, my brothers, I tries to live right, but my trials is heavy. Ain't nobody can tell who dey friend. Now, dere's dis here gal Ellen. I seen her walkin' wid Mensa two time an' havin' compersation. Her an' me is good friends. We go every

wey wid one another, an' I axe her wuh she see in Mensa, an' wuh de whole compersation 'bout, an' she say, "Is I broke any law? If I wants to talk wid Mensa, wuh make I ain't can talk to him?" Ain't you see how her mind run? An' I ain't never say a word 'bout her, cepen I went to Pooch an' Big Daughter an' Sister Janie an' Rachael an' I tell dem 'bout it an' axe dem to intercede an' I tell dem not to breath it to nobody. Wha' more kin I do? I is Ellen's friend, but I got to stan' by my Jesus too. Ain't none of we can serve two masters.

Scip: Sister, I ain't see where you can do no more dan you has done. Ellen oughts to love you.

Tad: Here comes Mensa. Sister, is you talk to Mensa?

Old Sister: No, I ain't said nothin' to Mensa, an' I ain't say nothin' 'bout Mensa. He so curious an' he so vigus he ain't never had no reason, an' he ain't got no conscious. He ain't got no right to run wid Ellen. He run after too much women. Well, I must tell you all good day. Mensa so 'spicious, if I stays here he mought think I been talkin' 'bout him an' Jesus know I ain't never called he name to nobody. Good day, my brothers.

(Mensa comes up)

Mensa: Gentlemens!

(Several voices acknowledging salutation)

Howdy! wha's de time? Ber Mensa.

Scip: Brother, you is a little 'lated. Dat ole gal of yourownt is jes lef' we.

Mensa: I seen Ole Sister lef' here. You ain't mean her, is you? er ole two face-ed wench.

Tad: Brother, you ain't ought to nuse them hard words 'bout er Christian ooman that gits down on her knees and prays to God to save your soul.

Mensa: I ain't axed de ole she rat to pray for me.

Scip: Calm ye-self, my brother. Ole Sister ain't say nothin' 'bout you. She jes tell we she ain't never call your name, neither this here gal Ellen. You know she Ellen's friend, an' Ole Sister take so much interest in she friends.

Mensa: It looks like dat's de kind er people God got all 'round here prayin' for Him. Jesus! If I could fasten my hand on her th'oat one time, I'd make her eye-balls jump out. But dere ain't no nuse, dere is so much hypocrite in dis world, dey all got low-down minds. You can do anything ef you doos it in de name of God, ef you don't do it to a Christian hypocrite. Some time it seems to me I could naturally set in de chair to git my satisfaction.

Voice: Be patient, brother.

Tad: My agvice is to go on your way rejoicing, 'tend to your own business an' don't pay no 'tention to Ole Sister. Time she find out you guh hab your own way, she luh you 'lone. Ole Sister got a kind er mind dat don't dwell long on sompen she can't

hurt. She got a selfish mind, she so stucked on she self, she ain't nobody's friend; she think she are a friend, but she ain't no friend. Her hide is thick as a ox hide, an' she don't belongs to 'sociate wid no other kind er mind.

Mensa: Tad, you is right.

(Ellen comes up. Greetings exchanged)

Ellen: Is you all see Ole Sister?

Scip: Yes, she ain't so long lef'.

Ellen: Wey she gone?

Mensa: De ole devil is gone on de devil's business. She been servin' de devil 'tendin' to he business an' other people's business.

Tad: Don't say dat, Mensa, think wha' you has a mind to think, but don't let no evil thoughts run out on your tongue.

Ellen: Shut your mouth, Mensa, Ole Sister my friend; she say she my friend.

Scip: She you friend, she say she you friend. I heared her say it.

Mensa: Come on, Ellen I'll walk a piece er de way home wid you.

Ellen: You can walk a piece er de way.

(They leave)

Ellen: Mensa, I thinks a heap er you, but I can't stan' for Ole Sister an' all un 'em talk. She my friend an' I loves you more'n all un 'em, but I can't gee up my friends for you, an' Ole Sister tell me

she an' she friends ain't guh have nothin' to do wid me ef I don't drap you, an' I ain't able to fight all un 'em. She say you is a bad man, an' course dey will stan' by me but dey ain't like it.

Mensa: Dey will stan' by you long enough to cut your th'oat.

Ellen: Dey has already done cut my th'oat. Long as dey kin keep me whipped, dey ain't guh lef' me.

Mensa: I'll try an' be friend wid 'em.

Ellen: Dat ain't no good, ef one un 'em were drownin' an' you save 'em, dey would say you done it jes so you could see me.

Mensa: Ellen, I is all broked up. I guh lef' you now. Honey, don't forgit me. I ain't no worse dan you friends.

Ellen: God be wid you, Mensa. Ef it do you any good, jes 'member I belongs to you. I love you an' I got friends an' I ain't never guh forgit how dey sting me. Good bye.

Mensa: Honey, good bye.

XI. OLD SISTER IN HEAVEN

Tad: Scip, is you all ever hear 'bout de big sturbance dey have in heaven?

Scip: Wuh kind er 'sturbance? Look like dey have nuff 'sturbance here. Dey ain't gone to havin' 'sturbance in heaven, is dey?

Bruser: Tell we, Tad.

Tad: I ain't know for certain it de trute, but I heared an' it soun' kind er pamelia to me.

Voice: Less we hear it, Ber Tad.

Tad: Well, one time one er dem ole sister dead an' slipped into heaven duenst a big storm. She ain't hit de bottom er de stairs 'fore she start sompen.

Voice: How you reckon she slip in, Tad?

Tad: Everything git so rough ole man Peter lef' de gate wid one er he chillun an' went to help Gable close de windows. De wind was blowin' at such a rate it look like it were guh blow all de shutters off, an' rain was comin' so fast it was spilin' de carpet. It blowed some of de angels out er de trees. Angels was mess up all over heaven. Dere been so much feather scatter 'round it look like all de angels in heaven was moultin! It 'stroy some er dey nes', an' little angels was layin' all 'round on de ground cryin' an' hollerin'. A turn er dem been out in de garden playin', some un 'em was jes larnin' to fly. Some of dey wing feathers ain't start to sprout yet. Most of de chillun out in de garden ain't been ole enough to fly, dey was layin' all round under rose bush an' tangled up in vine. Gabel been so busy he ain't know he head from he foots. Part er de time he was workin' at de windows wid Peter, and den he would quit an' run all 'round an' blow he horn for help. It look like dey never was guh git dem chillun back in de

mansion. Some er de chillun flewed up on de window sill. Dey'd hang dere a little while wid dey claws an' flop dey wings an' drap back on de groun'.

Voice: Tad, wey de Lord been? Ain't He kin stop all dat?

Tad: He been worryin' so 'bout He carpet, he forgit He got other things to 'tend to.

Voice: Wey Ole Sister all dis time, Tad?

Tad: You axe so much question, you turn my min' from Ole Sister. Dat storm blowed de gates open an' scared dat chile of Peter's so bad he run off an' Peter ain't find him for a week. An' when he is find him he been in a ole shed settin' down 'twixt two ole angels eatin' spiled manna. He mighty nigh loss all he feather.

Voice: Dat sho' must er been a storm.

Tad: It like to ruint heaven, an' it mighty nigh ruint de carpet, an' it spiled so much manna till de Lord had to put de angels on short rations.

Bruser: Wey Ole Sister been all dis time?

Tad: Well, she slipped into heaven when dat no 'count chile of Peter's lef' de gate. She creep 'round a while watchin' everything an' everybody. She kept quiet for one or two days, but she ain't shet she eye an' she mind been workin'. She'd sneak around an' watch de angels an' it ain't been long 'fore a man an' ooman angel dassent to set on de stairs, or walk in de garden together. She gee agvice to Peter, she

worry Mikel an' she had de tall angel worried up so till he spend most er he time settin' on de top of a barn by he self, an' Gabel say he mind tangled up so he mighty nigh forgit how to blow he horn. He say he don't reckon he never will git a chune out'n it again, an' Peter say de Lord guin him de devil 'bout lefen dat gate open. He say a storm kin blow heaven in half, but he'll never lef' de gate no more.

Voice: Ole Sister!

Tad: Dat ain't all. Ole Sister had de angels, mens an' womens, so 'sturbed up dey was feared to go to roost at night. Things got so bad an' ole Sister got such a start on 'em,—you know dey ain't nuse to seein' nothin like her in heaven,—she had Delilah so excited she cut off Aaron's beard, and she got so worse she started to carryin' tales to de Lord on He son. She mighty nigh create a fuss 'twix 'em.

Bruser: Dat sounds jest like our Ole Sister. I always is say you can't dodge 'em. I wonder wha' kind er lookin' whings she got.

Scip: I ain't know. I reckon dey is lousy jes like her mind wid ambier drippin' off her bill jes like it drip off her tongue in dis world.

Voice: Tad, did dey ever git rid on her in heaven?

Tad: Yes, dey git rid on her. One day de Lord an' He son went off on a piece of private business, an' took Gabel and Mickel wid Him, an' he lef' de mansion in charge of de tall angel. Dey ain't lef' good

'fore Ole Sister flewed up on de throne an' set herself dere to watch. While she was settin' dere three or four of dem rough angels what Ole Sister been pickin' at sneaked up behind her an' jerked her off de throne. She tried to holler an' flutter, but it ain't no nuse, dey put her in a crocus sack an' dragged her to de back door of heaven an' th'owed her out de door an' down de hill an' de last of dat ole sister seen from heaven she was rollin' an' bouncin' down de hill to hell where she b'long. She been so hard she been knockin' sparks out de rocks.

Voice: You reckon de Lord an' He son schemed dat er way to git rid on her?

Tad: I ain't know.

Scip: It ain't look like it safe to die an' it look like it dang'ous to live.

XII. OLD SISTER IN HELL

It were a wicked day in hell when Ole Sister come slidin' and bouncin' through the gates. Hell was full of moaners and prayer leaders and deacons from all the churches and there been a drove of preachers there and you could hear ever kind of sound comin' from the ole sister pen. The devil had generations of ole sister pen up in their own perticular pen and he dassen' turn 'um out dey act so wuss. He say if he ain't keep them ole sister pen up they will torment him more'n he can stan'. He say he punishment is

great but ef he ain't careful wid dem ole sister hell won't be a fitten place even for him and dey will always be tryin' to spile he reputation and undermine he authority. When our Ole Sister hit hell the first thing she do been to try and make sheself satisfied. She start messin' in everybody business, carryin' news on dis un and dat. Shadrach, Messach, and Abed-ne-go tooken to de fiery furnace, thought dey would escape there, but dat old gal went right on in and run 'em out. She put de serpent to makin' de crookedest track he ever make tryin' to escape. Everywhere she pass all dem old hell buzzards would scratch de feet and rise up. Dey had hot cinders and ashes sprinklin' everything in hell. De angels in hell would rise up in droves. Dey get so excited dat dey mighty nigh bust deyselves open flyin' into one another, an' all 'un 'um was cacklin' and screechin' and flyin' all through de flames from de mountains of hell right on down into de deep valley. De devil say she had 'im so nervous he can't sleep. He say he think he nerves is 'stroy. Dat old ooman done every kind of devilment, sneakin' 'roun' wid her eye skinned and her tongue hangin' out. She act just like she act 'roun' de churches and people in dis worl'. She alarm everything. She run into a drove of philistines and like to run dem out of hell, and she worried Judas Ascariot till he went to de devil and tell him he know he done a

heap of wrong but he know he don't deserve no such punishment as this. He say he betray Christ kase he thought Christ was so powerful he could pertect hisself, and he done it for thirty pieces of silver, but he say Old Sister do she devilment for nothin'. He say she betray Christ and everybody else in de worl'. Dats her nature, and he tell de devil if he lef' her alone she'll betray him and everything else in hell, and de devil own up how worry he been. He say one of the main troubles 'bout all dem ole sisters is dey is so tough he never is had a fire in hell hot enough to burn one of 'em and he said dis particular ole sister were extra bad. He say dey could not stan' her in heaven and dey threw her in hell. He say dey ain't as fair in heaven as dey makes out dey is and dey ain't treat him right. He say he don't mess up wid heaven and it look like all de angels in heaven will have a sin for throwin' dat old huzzy into hell unbeknownst to him. He say he will have to study up some scheme and trap her and get her in de pen. Dat Ole Sister got after Annias so hot till he like to lied heself out of hell, and when she spied Dives she made him flee and ever time he stop for breath old sister been dere. She run him up on de banks of de great Gulf and he looked across wid a longin' eye at Lazarus restin' in Father Abraham's bosom and he seed he could'nt make it, an' he cast he eye back one time at Ole Sister and jumped on in de Gulf. She

got after Lot's wife and Lot say he wife ain't never looked back since she got a glimpse of Ole Sister. He say ef he'd had Ole Sister atter he wife when they left Sodom he believes dey would of made it, all two un 'um. He say he mighty nigh believe de pillar of salt would of moved. But one of de men's who was havin' a wuss time and been mighty unrestless were King Solomon. He went to de devil wid tear in he eye an' axe 'im for de sake of he poor old father who been at dat very moment walkin' through de flames of repentence singin' psalms, and for de sake of he own peace of mind to he'p him get shet of Ole Sister. King Solomon had a long compersation wid de devil, and he tell him dat King David was a old man now and can't do no harm and he mine in sech a state he ain't know he suffer, but he feared Ole Sister would be carryin' some kind of tale on dat ole man and get him kilt, and den King Solomon say he would like to aid de devil wid some of he wisdom. He would like to he'p him get Ole Sister fasten' up. He say he can't rest he so feared she might git in dere amongst he numerous wives, and he tell de devil wid he knowledge of women it would be hell shore 'nough. He say it were well known what trouble Ole Sister could create wid one wife an' he have to be very careful wid he six hundred; dat it takes great wisdom to rule 'um. He say when he look at all dem wimmen he ain't shore he wise as he reputation, and

dere is time when dey is a great strain on him. Ole Sister rumpussed around hell so till complaints was comin' f'um ever which er way. She 'stirbed up the Moabites and she had the Malakites and de Hittites all gettin' ready for war. She been ever where, in ever place, high and low, wid dat scandal lovin' tongue of hern. She like to uh ruint dem poor little foolish virgins, tormented dem 'bout dere lamps and oil and other things and started all kind of scandalous tales on 'um. Her righteous mind always was runnin' on all kind of righteous things and so was her tongue. Brother, lem me tell you, you sees her kind ever day, in churches and frolics, wid dey eyes skinned meddlin' in other peoples business, carryin' news. Well things war in a terrible fix in hell and de las' news been dat de devil on de advice of Solomon had set a trap and baited it with a innocent lamb, and I reckon it will be have mercy on de lamb.

XIII. THE SETTIN' UP

Dere was a fellow that went to one of he fren's settin-up, and dis fren' was laid out dead on de coolin-board, and in some shape he wanted to go an' relieve him, an' he got down to prayer. Had a crowd of people there, too. He was prayin' dere wid he eyes shut, and he say, "Lord be wid dis deceased brother, he gone, he is dead; if it be thy will raise him; if it is not thy will, God, save his soul. God, he leaves

all he sisters, he brothers, he companions here behind him. God, be wid him, have mercy on him, save his soul. Father, it is within thy power to raise him, it is within thy power to save him. Lord, go with his bereaved family he leff behin'."

An' as he was down dere prayin', wid he eye shut, de man on de coolin' board raise up, an' set up, an' de people saw him an' slipped out an' sneaked out, an' he still prayin' an' he raise up an open he eyes an' sawed no people but de dead man in front of him an' he backed off de dead man an' grabbed up a ax, an he say:

"If you don't wait till I git out of here I'll finish killin' you."

An' ever since den mens has been more perticular 'bout what dey ax God to do.

XIV. THE LITTLE OLD MAN ON THE GRAY MULE

Tad: Wuh you run in here like you guh bus' your brains out fer? Is anything atter you?

Bruser: I see sumpen en it frighten me.

Tad: Wuh you see?

Bruser: I have been passin theu the Big Pea Ridge woods en I seems to hear the leaf cracklin'. I ain' know if I hear um ur no, but I sho I see sumpen, en I ain' know how I feel, en when I look I see a man runnin', wid he clothes tored mighty nigh off him

en he eye red en he tongue hang out like dog. He look like he all tored up. And while I look he pass out of sight. Before I can get myself straight I seen a houn' dog wid he nose to de groun' trailin', and he pass on. And I see a pack of dog en dey pass me en dey all look like dey barkin' on a trail, but dey ain't make no soun'. And atter while here come a little man wid he long hair on his shoulder, yaller, ridin' a gray mule, and he bent over he mule en he look like he whoopin' to he dog, and he pass on, and de moon look brighter, and de tree shadder look darker, and de frosts on de leaf look like snow. And I ain' move for a while and it look like my heart guh froze I been so frighten. And den I lef' and I ain't want stay no longer, and I ain't wan' go dere no more.

Voice: Who you reckon it been?

Bruser: I ain't know.

Old Daniel: Is dis de fust time you hear about de old man wid he gray mule and he houn' dog, and de runnin' nigger?

Tad: Tell we.

Old Daniel: Way back in slavery time old Marster's Daddy had a little yaller nigger. De old folks says he had heap uh nigger. He had nigger he raise, and he had wild nigger, and when dese niggers been unruly and git punished some of dem run off and de little yaller nigger wid de gray mule's business been to run um wid he dog. Dat been he juty and dat

been he pleasure, to say he ain' love nothen but he mule and he houn' and he old marster. And dey say dey ain' certain he love he old marster but he want to be friend wid him so he can have he pleasure. And in dem times in all de hours in de cold nights of winter and in de hot nights of summer and when de flowers is bloomin' or when de leaves is fallin' you could hear de little yaller man wid de gray mule whoopin' to he houn'. You could hear de dog trailin' and you knowed a nigger was in 'stress. And when he horn blow you knowed de race was done. And de little yaller man look kind and talk easy, and he look like he wouldn't harm nothen, but he heart, if he had a heart, been cruel as de teet' of de houn'.

Tad: Wuh make runnin' nigger wid houn' and punishin' 'um give him pleasure?

Old Daniel: Jesus knows. I ain' know. Ain't nobody know, but it is mighty hard to understand the minds of mens.

Voice: Un' Daniel, wuh he runnin' nigger now fer?

Old Daniel: Dat he sperrit. And all you see, de nigger wid he tongue hangin' out, de little yaller nigger wid de gray mule, all dem is de sperrits of dead mens and beasts and dey'll never git no rest. Dey punishment is to keep on runnin'. Dey run in slavery days. Dey's runnin' now, and dey'll be runnin' when you is kivered up in de groun'. And dey can be seen

in de dark woods when a bright moon is shinin' and de frost is on de leaf, and de people and critters of de worl' is asleep. Dey 'pears as a warnin' to mens.

XV. THE LAKE OF THE DEAD

Tad: De big swamp draws people like a trap draws flies, an' people dies in de big swamps like flies dies in traps. Dey's all kind o' unknown critters an' varmints an' trees an' herbs an' pison, an' you meets unknown men an' ain' know wey dey come from an' you ain't know wey dey gwine. Dey ain' right an' dey takes on de ways of things dat ain't nat'ral.

Kike: Dey is dang'ous. Ole man July tells me dere is one place in de big swamp ain' nobody know wey it is, but if you wanders far enough an' long enough, you is sho to fin' it an' you don't come back.

Tad: I is heared 'bout dat place. It's a lake o' water wey all humans an' beasts perish on its shores.

Kike: Tad, you sho is heared 'bout it. When I been chillun, de ole folks ain' 'lowed we to talk 'bout it, it was so fright'nin'. I heared it were a place wey nothin' can live, an' if it do live, it ain' never come back nat'ral. Humans loses dey minds, an' beasts never does act like other beasts, an' dey says its shores is strewed wid de dead, a hog one place an' a cow, here a little bird an' sometime it ain' nothin' but a bug. An' dead men lie dere, an' ain' nobody ever sees life cepen dreadful things.

Dey say dey is always one an' sometimes two or three buzzards walkin' through over an' 'round de dead. Sometimes a buzzard will be settin' on a log, an' sometimes dey will be slowly walkin' 'round like dey ain' dere for no purpose but to make de place look more dreadful. Dey don't seems to have to eat de food dat's put 'efore 'em, an' dey looks like some'n dat's dead wid de power to walk slow an' dey walks like dey counts dey footsteps, an' dey footsteps is de footsteps of de dead. Once in a while dey shake dey self an' streches out dey neck an' makes a sound dat makes your blood creep like dey was tryin' to make things as worse for your hearin' as it is dreadful for your eyes.

A beast will walk to de edge of de water an' raise his head an' poke he head way out an' look 'cross de lake, an' den he sinks down. Some beasts draws back, an' all seems to have de feelin' of another world creepin' on 'em. An' mens is de same way, but dey mind takes 'em wuh dey nature tells 'em to go back. Why it is an' wuh it is ain' nobody know, but don't seek it, my brother, don't seek it.

Voice: Who guh seek such a place, Un' Kike?

Kike: My brother, mens seeks many things an' strange places way dey got no business seekin', an' many falls into danger an' mens an' beasts stumble on hard things an' de big swamps breaks men. Some places is worser dan other places. Stay 'way, my

brother, stay 'way from de path of de buzzard; for ef you walks in dey path an' wanders too far, you'll land on de shores of de Lake of de Dead, an' men has walked on de shores of dis lake.

XVI. AUNT DINAH'S CAT

Bartchy: Dey shore been a tangle up in de old street an' Aun' Dinah look like she done loss her mind, she been raisin' such a rucas.

Tally: Wuh Aun' Dinah raise a rucas about?

Bartchy: Toodney kill Aun' Dinah cat.

Joe: Wuh he kill Aun' Dinah cat for?

Bartchy: I ain't know, but he say he been catchin' he Ma chicken an' killed him, an' all dem nigger mout' been runnin'. Soun' like a passel of frogs, night birds and varmints wey dey been hollerin' an' guin' on. I done hear so much talk 'bout cat my years is ringin', an' if dem niggers do wuh dey say dey guh do wid Toodney he in a wus fix den dat cat. The ole people always say bad luck will follow a man if he 'stroy a cat. The ole people says a heap of thing and some of them is wise. I ain't know.

Willis: If I been Toodney I ain't worry myself wid no cat. Some people looks like dey all de time sarchin' fer trouble an' cat look like dey mix up wid evil. Is your hear 'bout dis here boy, Jube, ole man stutterin' Jube grand-chile?

Tally: I is hear some kind of talk. Ain't he dead?

Willis: Un' Beve tell we Jube tooken he Ma cat an' throwed him in a big open fire. Dat cat scramble around in dat fire hollerin' an' when he git out he dash out de house wid all de hair burn off him, he eye burned an' he run off an' he cry like a chile. An' Jube tooken sick, an' he cry like a chile. An' he ain't got no res'. An' in a week from dat day Jube war dead. An' dat night at de settin' up an' all de time de people was moanin' dey hear dat cat cryin', cryin' and moanin'. An' next day when dey buried him de cat git right in de big road an' follow de funeral, follow de funeral to de grave hollerin', wid all de hair burned off him an' he eye burned out. An' Un' Beve say, everybody look at de cat. An de cat been kiver wid sore. An' when dey throw de dirt in de grave dat cat disappear an' ain't nobody see him since.

XVII. MURDER VS. LIQUOR

Scip: Well, things is gettin' wusser.

Tad: How come?

Scip: White folks been havin' such a time killin' niggers in self defense dey gettin' a taste fer killin' white folks de same way.

Tad: Wuh you talkin' 'bout, Scip, hush!

Scip: My mind has been runnin' on de law and de cotes. I just been ramblin' a little.

Tad: Wuh law and cotes, dey ain't never ought to have a law 'gainst killin' niggers.

Scip: Dey claims to have a law against killin' both white folks and niggers, but sometimes de law protects 'em an' ain't l'um be try.

Tad: Dey send ole man Reuben to the penitentiary fer seven months fer a little liquor.

Voice: Dey got to broke up liquor.

Scip: Reuben were a nigger an' hab liquor an' dat were de jedge in de big cote. Ain't he de law?

Tad: How come you say ain't he de law, and wuh you talk 'bout liquor for? You started off talkin' 'bout murder, now you gone to liquor.

Scip: Dey always punish fer liquor, an' de law 'lows killin', an' I ain't been talkin' 'bout no murder.

Tad: How come you say dat. You better hush your mout'.

Scip: Ain't I hear de jedge tell de jury to bring in a verdict of not guilty. He tell 'em dey can't try dis man. He guh pertec' him kase de law got de right to go in anybody house, day or night, rouse him out, and kill him if he try to 'fend he-self. All de officer got to do it to tell de jedge he were huntin' liquor.

Tad: Ain't he got to find it?

Scip: He can say he find it. He can say wuh he have a mind to say.

Tad: Scip, you ain't talkin' 'bout de big cote, is you?

Scip: No, I ain't talkin' 'bout de big cote. I jes sayin' de jedge is a great man and he can go against God if he got a mind to. He helt up de law, and de law is de law!

Tad: Have mercy! Jesus!

Scip: De jedge guh say wuh he guh say, an' he guh do wuh he guh do, an' he guh broke up liquor.

Tad: How 'bout murder?

Scip: I ain't say nothin' 'bout murder. I been talkin' 'bout liquor, an' de jedge is de law. When de jedge say dey ain't no murder, I ain't guh say dey is. De jedge know he business, an' I know mine, an' my business is to keep my eye wide open an' to keep my mout' shet tight, else if I got to open it I guh let my chune be he is a hones' jedge. He guh kill liquor! He guh kill liquor! He guh pertect everything in he cote from de louse in de witness box on uppass heself. He de law an' he guh broke up liquor. I ain' say nothin' 'bout no murder. Is killin' a man in he house at night murder when dey's huntin' liquor? It ain't matter how dey kill him if dey is huntin' liquor.

Tad: Scip, you is right. Murder is one thing, and liquor is another.

Scip: An' de jedge is de jedge, an' de law mus' be helt up. De jedge is a great man. He is a hones' man. He know he business an' he guh broke up liquor.

XVIII. OLD DICTODEMUS

Leader: Brothers and sisters, Brother March will preach to you tonight, and he words is always full of meanin' and dey ain't no fool words. Dey got dey meanin' and if you listen good, you will see he p'int. He tell you wuh he tell for de understandin' of colored folks. Brother March speaks our language and he speaks in words of wisdom.

Brother March: 'Way back yonder when Paul and Jesus and other great mens was in de world and was tryin' to save sinners from a burnin' hell, dere was men dat thought dey self bigger dan anybody else. Some un 'em had heared of Jesus, and some un 'em ain't know nothin' 'bout him, and if dey is know, dey try to discount him. But, my brothers, Jesus ain't been a man for nobody to discount. He were a man ain't never git mad; he was such a man he could grab a lion by de head and wring it off jes like you would wring a chicken's neck. He was such a man he could reach out one hand and grab de top off a mountain and throw it 'cross de world. Dat's de kind er man Jesus was.

And dere was a man in dem times dey called him Dictodemus. He were a great bad man. He defied God and Man, all two un 'em, and laugh 'bout it. He was a man was always fightin' and beatin' up people but one day ole Dictodemus, dis great bad man, run

into de wrong man,—he met he match. He tried to put his self up against Capt'n Jesus. He ain't know it was Jesus, but it ain't take long to find out.

Well, Jesus ain't waste much time on Dictodemus, he had so much other things he was 'tendin' to. Ole Dictodemus got so humble he start to slippin' 'round at night tryin' to creep up to Jesus' tent, but Jesus run him off, he wants to git him when de right time comes. He wants to tes' him out.

One day he met Dictodemus in a lonely spot on de big road, and he stopped and had a talk wid him. Jesus been ridin' a little mule ain't no bigger dan a mouse, and he dismount and he say to Dictodemus, "Mount." And Dictodemus look at de little critter and sorter hold back, and Jesus say, "Mount." And Dictodemus mounted and rode a long distance into de holy city of Jerusalem, and when he git dere, de little mule stopped right in de heart of de city in de front of de temple, and Dictodemus say to de little mule, "Go on." And de little mule shake he self two or three times and started to buckin' and jumpin', and he th'owed Dictodemus clean out er sight, and when he landed he were on de back of sompen, he ain't know wuh it were. It had horns like a goat, but it ain't no goat; it had years like a cow, but it ain't no cow; it had a mouth like a hog, but it ain't no hog. And Dictodemus' mind been all angled up, he ain't know wuh it were; he ain't know wuh happen, he

ain't know he self when Jesus appeared and hold up he hands and say, "Let dere be peace." And den he stepped back on he little mule and rode out to Jerusalem wid Dictodemus followin' behind on he foots tame as a dog.

Excited Sister: (Shrieking at the top of her voice)
Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord, My Jesus!
It must a been a mule!
It must a been a mule!
It must a been a mule!
Congregation: (Chanting)
It must a been a mule!
It must a been a mule!
It must a been a mule!

XIX. JEFF'S FUNERAL SERMON

Reverend:

Oh, Lord, dis man was born in sin, an' he died in Christ.
He sold his lot in Egypt, an' he bought a lot in Paradise.
Watch wey you put your foot-steps,
Don' put 'em in de mud.
Kiver up your tracks,
'En look out for de serpents dat's lyin' all 'bout.
Don' tell your secrets,
Don' put your trus' in mens,
But put your faith in Jesus,

He is de only fren' you got.
Keep your eye upon your foot-steps,
Kiver up your tracks,
Don' walk in de mud.

Old Lucy: (*Walking up and down the aisles, waving her hand and hollering at the top of her voice*)

Great God, Reverend, hold your holt! I'm gwine to my Jesus! I'll bus' heben wide open wid a trail of light leading to my Lord. Great God, Reverend, hold your holt!

Jeff's Son: (*Standing by the coffin, bending up and down and hollering*)

Pa, Oh, Pa! Pa gone. I de last one talked wid Pa. Pa tell me, he say tear down dis shed an' buil' a better one. Pa, Oh, Pa! Ain't you hear me? I goin' do what you say.

Feminine voice in back of congregation, shrieking:

Jesus, Jesus, gone to Jesus!

Reverend:

Oh, Lord, dis man was born in sin an' he died in Christ.
He sold his lot in Egypt, an' he bought a lot in Paradise.
For he watch where he put he foot-steps.
An' he kiver up he tracks.

He place his faith in God, an' he walk aroun' de serpents that was lyin' all 'bout.
He put his faith in Jesus, an' he trusted in he God.
He kept his eye upon he foot-steps.
He kivered up he tracks, an' he never put 'em in de mud,
For he put he faith in God.
Oh, Lord, he born in sin, an' he died in Christ,
He sold he lot in Egypt, an' he bought a lot in Paradise.

Old Lucy: Great God, Reverend, hold your holt! I'm goin' to bus' heben wide open wid a trail of light leadin' to de throne.

Voice: (*of sister, in middle of congregation*)

Lead us, Sister Lucy,
Lead us to de light.
Lead us from de darkness,
Lead us from de night.
Lead us toward de throne,
Where all is snowy white.

Reverend:

Our deceased brother was born in sin, an' he died in Christ.
He sold his lot in Egypt,
An' he bought a lot in Paradise.
He has placed his foot-steps on de golden stairs,

He never put 'em in de mud.
He has kivered up his tracks.
He's up in heben.
He is on his way to Jesus.
He has throwed away his crown of thorns.
He has shunned the path of serpents.
He steps beneath the silver lights,
He is walking on the golden stairs,
He is climbing to the pearley throne.
He'll set up a foot-stool at the feet of Jesus.
He'll tell to him the secrets
That he didn't tell to mens,
For he is walkin' up the golden stairs,
He is climbing to the pearley throne,
And he will set upon a foot-stool in spotless white,
Beneath the bright and shining lights of heben.
And he will tell his troubles to his God,
For he was born in sin,
An' he died in Christ.
He sold his lot in Egypt,
An' he bought a lot in Paradise.

Old Lucy:

Great God, Reverend, hold your holt!
I'm goin' to bus heben wide open,
I'm goin' to the throne of Christ.
I'm goin' to make a trail of light.
I'm goin' out of darkness,

I'm goin' to lef' behind de night.
I'm on my way to Jesus,
I'm goin' to my Christ,
I'm goin' to shout my way theu Paradise,
Great God, Reverend, hold your holt!

XX. FRAGMENT OF A NEGRO SERMON

Our Brother is dead,
He rests from he labor
An' he sleeps,—
(*Shrill voice of Sister*) He sleeps, Oh, he sleeps!
Wey de tall pines grow,
(*Another voice*) On the banks of a river.
On the banks of a river.
(*Several voices*) On the banks of a river.

He trouble is done,
He's left dis world
On the wings of glory.
(*Voice*) On the wings of glory!
Out of life's storm,
(*Another voice*) On the wings of glory!
Out of life's darkness,
(*Several voices*) On the wings of glory!
He sails in the light,
Of the Lamb.
Away from his troubles,
Away from the night
(*Congregation*) In the light!
In the light!
Of the Lamb.

He's gone to the kingdom above,
In the raiment of angels,
(*Voice of Sister*) In the raiment!
In the raiment of angels!
To the region above,
An' he sleeps,—
(*Voices chanting throughout congregation*)
Oh, he sleeps,—
Oh, he sleeps!
On the banks of a river.
Way de tall pines grow,
On the banks of a river.
(*Congregation*) With the starry crowned angels,
On the banks of a river.

An' the flowers is bloomin'
In the blood of the Lamb.
(*Shrill voice of Sister and taken up by congregation chanting and swaying*)
The blood of the Lamb!
In the blood of the Lamb!
An' the birds is singin'
Wey de wind blows soft,
As the breath of an angel,
An' he sleeps!
Wey de tall pines grow,
On the banks of a river.
(*Voice*) An' he sleeps!
(*Another voice*) Wey de tall pines grow.
An' his sperrit is guarded,
(*Several voices*) On the banks of a river.
By a flaming-faced angel.
(*Sister*) Yes, Jesus, of a flaming-faced angel
On the banks of a river.

Standing on mountains of rest.
An' he sleeps way de tall pines grow,
On the banks of a river.
(*Congregation*) Oh, he sleeps!
He sleeps!

XXI. HIS DAY IS DONE

His day is done,
His work is over,
And he is riding through the sky,
(*Shrill voice of Sister*) He is riding, Oh, yes, he's riding,
through the sky.
To his home in the heavens,
Just above the thunder,
(*Another voice*) Just above the thunder.
In a golden chariot,
(*Another voice*) In a chariot,
In a chariot.
Just above the thunder.
(*Other voices*) In a golden chariot,
Just above the thunder.

Jesus waits for him,
At his home in the sky,
There's wings on his chariot,
(*Sister*) There's wings on his chariot,
on his chariot,
on his chariot,
And a light around his head,
(*Another voice*) A light, a light, a light around his head
Just above the thunder,

In a golden chariot,
(*Other voices*) In a golden chariot,
Just above the thunder.
Just above the thunder.

His life was weary,
But he's done his duty,
And now his road's beyond the clouds,
(*Several voices*) Beyond the clouds,
Beyond the clouds,
Beyond the clouds.
In a golden chariot,
Just above the thunder,
In a golden chariot,
(*Another voice*) In a golden chariot,
In a golden chariot.

Just above the thunder.
(*Congregation*) Just above the thunder.

He does not dread the lightning,
From sin his soul is free,
(*Several voices*) His soul is free, free,
Oh, his soul is free.
He sweeps across the skies,
With Jesus as his guide,
Just above the thunder,
In a golden chariot,
Just above the thunder.
(*Congregation*) Yes, Jesus is his guide.
Just above the thunder,
In a golden chariot,
Just above the thunder.

And he looks with pity upon the world,
(*Voice*) Pity, pity, he looks with pity upon the world.
That he has left so far below,
He's flying in a chariot,
(*Another voice*) He's flying in a chariot.
And angels is his horses in the sky,
(*Shrill voice*) And angels is his horses, in the sky.
Just above the thunder,
(*Sister*) Angels is his horses.
In a golden chariot,
Just above the thunder.
(*Congregation*) Just above the thunder
In a chariot,
A golden chariot,
Just above the thunder.

XXII. OLE MAN ROGAN

Balti: Ain't had so much luck since we been fishin' here. Dis here place done fish out.

Tunga: Less we lef' here and go to Boggy Gut. Ain't nobody fish much dere.

Old Bill: I rudder stay here and don't have so much fish. I never is think too much of Boggy Gut.

Tunga: How come you ain't want to go to Boggy Gut?

Old Bill: Is you 'member hearin' 'bout Ole Man Rogan name call?

Balti: I hear Ole Man Rogan name call, but I ain't know nothin' 'bout him. Tell we.

Old Bill: Ole Man Rogan nuse to sell nigger in slavery time. Dat's wey he nuse to fishin', and every time he come for res' he come to Boggy Gut. Ole Man Rogan a man wid curious ways. He ain't beat a nigger much, and he guin him plenty to eat, and he bring 'em here in drove and he have 'em chained together, but he have curious ways and he ain't have but one pleasure,—settin' fishin'. He always buy ooman wid chillun, and ooman wid husband, and ain't nobody can buy from Ole Man Rogan mother and chile or man and ooman. He great pleasure been to part. He always love to take er baby away from he ma and sell it, and take he ma somewhere else and sell her, and ain't luh 'em see one another again. He love to part a man and he ooman, sell de man one place and sell de ooman another, and dat look like all Ole Man Rogan live for, and when he ain't 'casion 'stress dat er way, he been onrestless. He love to see a man wid he head bowed down in 'stress, and he love to see chillun holdin' out dey arms cryin' for dey mother, and he always looked satisfied when he see tear runnin' down de face of er ooman when she weepin' for her chile.

And Ole Man Rogan die on Boggy Gut, and ever since den he sperrit wander and wander from Boggy Gut to de river and wander 'cross de big swamps to Congaree. Whether it be God or whether it be devil,

de sperrit of Ole Man Rogan ain't got no res'. Some time in de night ef you'll set on Boggy Gut, you'll hear de rattle of chains, you hear a baby cry every which er way, and you hear a mother callin' for her chile in de dark night on Boggy Gut.

And you kin set on de edge of Boggy Gut and you'll see mens in chains bent over wid dey head in dey hands,—de signs of 'stress. While you sets you see de sperrit of Ole Man Rogan comin' 'cross de big swamps. You see him look at de womens and mens and chillun, and you see him laugh—laugh at de 'stress and de tears on Boggy Gut, and he laugh like he satisfied, but he ain't had no res'. And when he stayed a minute on Boggy Gut, to de river 'cross de big swamps and back again he wanders, on de edge of Boggy Gut.

XXIII. BIG CHARLESTON

Tad: All dis compersation 'bout hot suppers, dances, womens and funerals brings a heap of diff'ent things to my mind. One thing I been thinkin' 'bout been Big Charleston and he doin's, and dat ain't one thing neither. It er range of things kiverin' diff'ent things in life,—a laugh one place and a tear another.

Barchy: I jes is 'member Big Charleston. He create a lot of 'sturbance in he time. Some folks

says he was a human, and some says he were a beast and dey say he was double j'inted.

Scip: Well, deys all kinds of diff'ent roads to de grave, and Big Charleston ain't been too long findin' out he road.

Voice: Tad, tell we de tale 'bout Big Charleston.

Tad: De first time I see Big Charleston been at a dance and hot supper over to de ole street. Dem niggers been havin' some time eatin' hash and rice, drinkin' liquor, singin' reels and dancin' and gamblin' and fightin'. You could hear 'em laughin' and talkin' a mile. Dey come to de road jumpin' to de drum and steppin' as high as a man's head. And as de night wored on you ought er seen some of dem niggers cut de buck and de buzzard lope, and sidin' 'round dem sisters like er rooster 'round er hen. Everything been lovely till dis gal of Potee's from de bluff come. She been pritty, but my brothers, I is here to tell you she been one little devil, and she 'casioned more'n one funeral. When she hit dat floor, niggers got to movin' and de fiddlers made dem fiddles talk and sing and cry. And dat little gal she was dartin' up to one nigger and leffen him and dartin' up to another. Back and forth she was swingin' and swayin', flyin' 'round dere like some kind of little bird. She dat pritty and sweet she set dem niggers crazy. And den she picked out Silas for her man, and Big Charleston come up and

walked 'round de room, den he fasten he eye on de little gal and he lean over and snatch her from Silas like some kind of great hawk takin' a chicken in he claw right out de flock. And when he do dat, de little gal pull back and say she guh stay wid Silas. Den de trouble start.

All dem niggers been 'gainst Charleston. Charleston picked Silas up and th'owed him 'gainst de wall. Den dey started crowdin' him, and he looked like a boar hog wid a passel of fice dogs 'round him, and every time he twis' he self some of dem niggers was drapped jes like fices draps when a boar hog rips 'em up wid he tushes. Every time Big Charleston hit a nigger, a nigger hit de floor. When he'd reach out and grab a nigger, it look like he guh broke him in half, he'd pick de nigger up and slam him down and de nigger would tremble a little bit and lay still. Big Charleston been bleedin' all over wey dem niggers stucked him. He reached over and wring a stick out of a nigger's hand, and den he clean up. Niggers was th'owed all over de place, and Silas was dead, and dat little gal th'owed herself down and weep and moan over Silas, and she promise herself and she promise God dat she were guh make Big Charleston travel de same road he send Silas.

And Charleston walk out wid he head up and walk to de boss, and de doctor 'tend him. Den dey

'res' him, and de boss say he'll be tooken care of, and he been tooken care of. He been a favor-ite wid de boss.

And dat night at de settin' up dem niggers been talkin' 'round, moanin' and weepin', and dat little gal of Potee's been leadin' de singin' and she were prayin' and moanin'. And de followin' Sunday dey bury Silas and dere was great moanin' and weepin' from de sisters, and I ain't know whether dey weepin' for Silas or for Big Charleston. And dat little gal look like she guh bus' her heart out de way she holler. Her voice ring out all over de place and dat preacher tried his self, and brothers and sisters was swingin' and swayin', and shoutin' and singin', and it look like all of 'em had forgit everything but de sperrit, and de sperrit lifted 'em from de earth. When dey start comin' out wid de box to take Silas to de grave, dat little gal th'owed herself 'cross it and called on Silas and beg God for Jesus' sake to take her along and lay her in de same grave wid Silas. And de sisters lif' her up, tored her loose from de coffin and dey buried Silas.

Barchy: And wuh dey do wid Big Charleston?

Tad: Dey ain't do nothin' to Big Charleston, jes take him to de cote and dey try him, but de boss he been behind him, and when he lawyer git up and tell dat jury wuh kind of hand Big Charleston been and how much work he can do, he say he ain't never

been in no trouble wid white folks, and he say, "You all ain't got nothin' 'gainst Charleston, wuh he do? He kill one nigger in self defense, and he broke up two or three others. Wuh harm is Big Charleston do?" And dat little gal of Potee's been dere. Instead of her being agin Big Charleston, she help him, and when de jury turn Big Charleston loose, wuh she do? She set dere and wait. When she come out de cote house, she been wid Charleston and she been recognize as he ooman.

Scip: You sho' never is know wuh er ooman guh do. De bes' thing you kin do is to figger out wuh dey guh do, and dey is more'n apt to be contrary and do de other thing, and den your mind is more'n apt to have you wrong. You never is know wuh er ooman guh do.

Tad: Well, I figger out womens dis er way. When it comes to mens heap er time it ain't matter wuh er man do or wuh kind of man he be. Look at all de womens. All un 'em atter Big Charleston, and dey know wuh kind of man is Big Charleston, and most generally dat's womens.

Voice: Wuh come of him, Tad?

Tad: Well, him and dat little gal live together, and she been crazy 'bout Charleston, but atter while he lef' her and tooken up wid another ooman. Dat's de way he started travelin' on he las' road. Dat little gal mighty nigh tored de other ooman up, and

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she stick er knife in Charleston and he die, but 'fore he die he grab her and twis' her over and broked her neck on he knee, den he fall back and she fall 'cross him and when dey find 'em dey both been kivered wid blood.

Scip: All you got to do is follow womens.

XXIV. THE YELLOW CRANE

Jube: Limus dead back in de swamp on Crane Lake.

Sandy: Wuh ail him?

Jube: Him and Saber been seinin' back dere wid a gang of dem Free Issues, and dey all come out of de water. Limus stan' up on de edge of de lake and look out dere and look like he froze; he looked and stiffen he self and nod he head like he geein answer to somebody out in de water. Saber say he look like he git a call to come on and he ain't got to go less he gree, and he nod he heard and stiffen he self like he see sompen ain't no human ever see 'efore, and den he shake all over and drap dead. And Saber say he ain't see a God's thing in dat lake but a monster big crane, a yaller crane.

He say it were a natural crane, but he been yaller wid eye like a goose, and he been taller dan a man and he had a bill longer dan de handle of a blacksmith's tongs. He say he noticed dat good, kase when Limus drap he seen him open he bill and work it

like he were laughin'. He twis' he head dis way and dat and he ain't make a sound, but he wink he eye and ain't never shet it, but he half close it. It look like some kind of evil sperrit lookin' through a crack in de side of he head. He said dat ole bird guin him de ague.

Den he say dat crane rumple up he feather and shake he self. He start walkin' straight to wey Limus lay. He say he look at him good. He look like a crane and he look like a man, like a ole man yaller wid a beard, and he look evil and he look like de father of death. And he walk up to wey Limus lay and stoop down 'side him and put he head close to Limus' head like he listenin' to sompen. Den he twis' he head one side and look at him careful and laugh widout makin' a sound. Den he step 'cross Limus and put he foot on him like he scorn him, den he reach 'round his self like a man pullin' a cloak 'round him and walk out 'cross de big swamp wid he head drawed up. He look more sinful dan sin. He look satisfied and he look like he were in misery. Saber say he ain't know wuh to make of how he look, he look so much diff'ent kind of way.

Sandy: Wuh de ole Issue do?

Jube: I axe Saber and he say he look and he seen all dem Issue walkin' off through de swamp, and dey ain't say nothin' and dey ain't look like

humans. He say he ain't call 'em and ain't wan call 'em. He say de swamp look evil wid de yaller mud from de high water up on de trees higher 'an a man's head, and shadows from de trees and flies and things flyin' 'round. And up in de air a hawk been sailin' 'round and a buzzard way up dere in de sky; and through de yaller swamp de yaller crane and de goose eye yaller Issue was passin' in de distance mixin' wid everything else dat were yaller, and passin' dis way comin' into sight one minute and fadin' de nex' till dey all was swallowed up and everything were like it were not in a human world.

Saber say it were dreadful, and ef it had er las' much longer, he would er drap down dead like Limus done. He say he ain't know how he git home, and he know he days is shortened.

Kike: You all ain't got no sense. You ain't heared 'bout de yaller crane of Crane Lake? Wuh you reckon dey call dat place Crane Lake for?

Voice: Wuh?

Kike: It been Crane Lake way back in slavery time when my grand-daddy's pa been chillun, and it ain't never been no place for crane, scusin' de big yaller crane Saber see, and dat ain't been no crane.

Back in slavery time dey been a ole Issue who daddy sent him off to a furrin lan' for schoolin'. He sent him when he were chillun and he brung him

back when he were a man. And dis here Issue been mighty smart wid heap er book and heap er larnin', and when he come back to de Sand Hill he been a doctor, and he live by he self. He had more sense 'an white folks and niggers both; he scorn everybody, nigger and white folks; and dey tells tales 'bout how he nuse to 'casion niggers to die. Dey say he ain't never miss a chance, and ain't nobody ketch him. White folks was feared on him wusser 'an nigger, and he look like he ain't got no nuse for Issue, but dey say he ain't harm 'em.

And he nuse to walk in de big swamp, and de ole folks says he would stan' on Crane Lake and laugh at he own weeked ways, and he were satisfied when some folks died; and he been full of misery for he self and everybody, but a real nigger were pison to him, and he were pison to de nigger. He hair were straight and he been goose eye and he look like a crane and he wored a long black cloak. He died on Crane Lake and many slavery time niggers die on Crane Lake, and dere is certain times when de yaller crane is seen, and a nigger always die and dey is enticed dere by Free Issues wid one excuse or another.

Voice: Un' Kike, you done guin me a chill. Wuh he have 'ginst niggers?

Kike: I ain't know. De ole folks says dat de way dey come to be Free Issues dat white womens

were dey mammy and niggers were dey daddy, and de law ain't 'low de chillun of a white ooman to be a slave; and a new lookin' race of goose eye niggers was created, and dey had minds of dey own and ways of dey own. Dey was discounted by white folks and dey was scorned by niggers.

And now I done tell you de first start of Issues and dey creatin'. I ain't know no more and I ain't guh say no more.

XXV. WHITE FOLKS IS WHITE FOLKS

Tad: Wey all dem niggers?

Preb: Dey down dere.

Tad: Down dere wey?

Preb: Down dere to de fire on de creek.

Tad: Wuh dey do down dere?

Preb: Hab heap er compersation an' tellin' a passel er lies.

Spencer: Preb, you ought to be shame on yourself scusin' people er tellin' a passel er lies. You ain' got no 'casion to say dat.

Preb: How come I ain' got no 'casion to say wuh I say? Ain' I see all dem niggers together? Ain' I got my two good eye?

Tad: Your eye ain' hear 'em tell no lie.

Preb: Trute, my eye ain' hear 'em, but my eye see a passel er niggers, an' more en that I been where dey is an' my years heared 'em. Wey dey

go to wid all dat compersation if dey ain' lie? Tad, if I ain' knowed you, I'd think you wuz a fool. Wuh dey hold so much compersation about?

Spencer: Tad, you ain' ought ter axe Preb dat. You fixin' to make Preb lie.

Tad: Luh him lie. It ain't hurt nobody when he lie. I an' you an' him all know he guh lie. Luh him lie. He ain' fool no nigger, an' if he keep in practice hit will help him wid de white folks.

Spencer: Tad, I ain' guh jine you an' Preb in your lowness.

Preb: Brother, I ain' tell no lie, Un Scip boy been off an' he tell dem niggers ef dey jine togedder dey can rise up an' take dey own place in de worl', an' he been talkin' 'bout schoolin' an' 'bout respect dey self an' how dey will be respected. He say dey got a long road to travel, an' it's up hill all de way, dat dey's down in de valley of darkness now, but bright lights is shinin' at de top. He say de road is long over high mountains an' dat dey will fall in deep gullies; dat dey got to keep on climin' to reach de Promised Land. He tell 'em to gird up dey lines an' git de scent of guano off 'em; hit ain' 'lowed on dat road. He say dere will be storms an' worser storms, an' some will drap on de road side, but dey must keep dey eye on de light at de top of de hill; dey must climb out of de mud an' 'stroy de briers dat tangle dey feet. He tell dem to take up dey

bed an' walk. If dey don't show dey own manhood dey ain' nobody goin' to show it for them. He say niggers lives today an' does today an' don't study 'bout tomorrow.

Tad: Wuh you say to him, Preb?

Preb: I done say wuh I guh say. I lisen to wuh he say.

Tad: Dat ain't nothin' but nigger talk.

Spencer: A nigger's a nigger. If he tempts to be better'n a nigger a nigger pulls him down an' a cracker pushes him down. Down is de nigger's cry. He's got two main enemies—crackers and niggers. White folks is white folks, crackers is crackers an' niggers is niggers.

XXVI. WILD GOOSE NEST

Brother Hickman: Brothers and Sisters, we come before the Lord this day with prayer. Dear father, look down from the throne on high and view these children of yourn. Look into dey hearts and see if dey's pure. Jesus, if dey ain't make 'em repent and don' lu'm tell no lies dis day, Amen.

Congregation: Tell us about it, Brother.

Brother Hickman: Sister Peggie, what is your experience? Has you reached a determination in your travels?

Sister Peggie: Brother, I is. I travel a long distance and de road been rough and mighty dark,

and at a long distance and at a great height and nigh de end of de road I find a wild goose nest, and all the eggs but one is white, and it were black.

Brothers and Sisters: (Chanting)

Wild goose nest,
Wild goose nest,
Wild goose nest.

Brother Hickman: Sister, go back in de wilderness and pray some more. Go seek again till all de eggs in de wild goose nest is white.

Shrill voices from Sisters in different parts of the congregation:

Wild goose nest,
Wild goose nest,
Wild goose nest.

(Sister Peggie goes and returns)

Sister Peggie: Brother Hickman, I traveled to de wild goose nest, and de road been long and de road been rough, and I come to de wild goose nest.

Voices in congregation: Tell us, Sister.

Sister Peggy: Wild goose nest,
Wild goose nest,
Wild goose nest.

And de nest been soft with
Feathers, from de wild Goose' breast

Wild goose breast,
Wild goose breast,
Wild goose breast.

An' all de eggs been white but one,
And it still were black.

Brother Hickman: Go back, Sister Peggie! Go back in de wilderness and seek again for a determination. There still is work to be done. Go, and pray and seek, sister, till all de eggs in de wild goose nest is white.

Congregation: Wild goose nest,
Wild goose nest,
Wild goose nest.

(Sister Peggie goes, and returns for the third time.)

Brother Hickman: What you find Sister Peggie?

Sister Peggie: Brother, I have been to de wild goose nest and all de eggs is white. All de eggs is white.

Brother Hickman: My Sister, you has reach a determination in your long travel and your labors is done. Rise, Sister, your journey is done.

Congregation: Wild goose nest,
Wild goose nest,
Wild goose nest.

XXVII. TRANSMIGRATION

Frank: Seems to me I hears sompen comin'.

Scip: 'Tain' nothin' but Tad.

(Tad walks up)

Tad: Yes, it ain' nothin' but Tad, and that ain' nothin'.

Scip: Wuh make you say dat? Ole Taddy! Nigger, you does sometimes tell the truth, even ef you ain' means to; but watch out, a lie is comin', I'm tellin' you, my buddy.

Voice: Tad, where you been?

Tad: I lay down back there in de swamp wid my head on a log and drapped asleep, an' I ain' wake up 'till I hear somebody laughin' and talkin', an' when I open my eye, one of dese here owls been settin' on a limb of a dead snag right by me, an' he look right down in my eye and laugh an' say, "Brother, is you restin'?" and I say, "I is been restin', but I done wid res' now. I is leffen' here." An' he say, "Brother, hole on a minute." An' I look at him good, an' I see he ain' no owl, but he been people, an' I get more intent on leffen. But dat old bird look like he helt, an', my brothers, he looked dried up and weeked, an' then he say he been a friend of my grandpa way back in slavery.

Voice: Great God, dat's when I would er tored out.

Tad: You thinks you would er tored out. You wouldn't er tored out no more en I done, an' I had a mind to, but I ain' been able to. Dat ole bird tell me when he been in dis world, he been ole man Smart Daniel' daddy, en he say he don't res' none. He spen' he time flyin' aroun' in de night an' talkin' most of de time wid other spirits, an' sometimes he makes heself known to humans. He say he ain' live right in dis world, an' he an' none un um can stand the light of day, an' he main pleasure is meetin' de chillun of he ole friend and dey chillun, when dey pass out of dis world an' take on de same shape he take on. An' he say some un um takes on other shapes an' lives in de form of different birds and animals, an' when dey is 'stroyed dey changes dey shapes. He say one shape don't recognize nobody in a different shape, an' he ain' know when he catch a bird or a snake ef he eatin' he friend or no.

Voice: Great God! You reckon all dat true, Tad?

Tad: I ain' know, but it sound like de truth, an' every time he say sompen, he'd laugh an' cold sweat would bust out on me, an' den he tell me he guh look for me, in he world a little later, an' dat we guh have some time laughin' an' talkin' 'bout different things, an' ef he can, he guh see some more.

Voice: My God!

Another Voice: Do Jesus!

Tad: I reckon I los' my life now tryin' to keep from goin' to sleep.

Frank: You say he put a spell on you, Tad, an' you ain' been able to lef'? How come you is here now?

Tad: Brother, I ain' linger wid dat ole spirit no longer than de law 'low. All of dat compersation of hisn ain' create no enjoyment in my min'. I jes naturally ain' been able to move 'til he say, "Son, I guh put sompen in your year you always will 'member. I guh gee you a spirit world sign so we can recognize one 'nother when you time come." Well, I say, "Wuh it is?" An' he say, "I can't say it out loud. I guh whisper it to you." An' when he say dat, he hopped down off de snag and started walkin' to me, laughin' de worse he know how. Dat were when I busted de spell. I ain' want no spirit world sign, an' I ain' want no ole mens whisperin' in my year, 'specially weeked ole dead mens, an that's when I broke loose. An' you know dat ole spirit float along behind me laughin' an' hollerin' an' makin' de worse sound I ever is hear mighty nigh all de way to dis camp.

Frank: You can look for anything in dis swamp you ain' wan' to see.

Voice: I never wus too much for dis swamp in de day-time, much less de night.

Scip: Well, Tad and ole man Smart Daniel' daddy ain' de onliest ones guh pass out of dis life an' take on de looks of birds an' beasts. Some un um takes on dem looks an' ways in dis life, an' I ain' 'sputin' nobody when dey says it b'longs to em.

Voice: I reckon it's time we bes' be lef'in' here.

XXVIII. BELTON'S SPIRIT

Tad: Well, Buddy, I am mighty nigh finished wid de big swamps.

Voice: Why is you say dat, Tad?

Tad: Las' week I been 'way back in de swamp on Hen-House Gut an' when I was comin' out I had dis here boy of Crappos wid me an' heared a lim' fall and the bark tored off an' sumpen' scramble up a high pine, an' I had my gun an' start to the tree an' thought it were a varmint, when dat boy ketched me by the sleeve an' he ain't say nothen, an' pull at my sleeve, an' I say, "wait a minute" an' den he say, "Come on! Les we lef' here!" An' I start off agin' an' he spring on my back an' like to th'owed me down. An' I say, "Wuh ail you?" an' he say, "come on!" I see a man clam' up dat tree, an' I look at him, an' he ain't look natural, an' my min' tell me it were best we lef'. An' when we get on the edge of the swamp I axe him wuh make he act that-a-way, an' he say, "I see a man clam up dat

tree," an' he ain't say nothen else, an' my mind tell me don't say no more.

Voice: Wuh reckon it been, Tad?

Tad: I see Cott next day, an' I axe him 'bout it, an' he tell me, "Tad, ain't you know dat de tree they lay Belton out under?"

An' I ain't say no more.

XXIX. THE ANIMAL COURT

Rab: Wuh ail you, Israel, how come you tored up so bad?

Israel: I got tored up in dat cane-brake.

Voice: Wuh make you go through cane-brake?

Israel: I been back on de bee-tree track, down by the big sand-bar, 'en I see all kinds of thing walking around on sand-bar, an' dey ain't look natural, 'en I took de shortest course an' I ain't luh no cane-brake an' brier patch an' gut stan' in my way, 'en I got tored up.

Voice: What kind of thing you see, Israel?

Israel: God knows, I ain't know. Wuh I see frighten me.

Kike: Dat sand-bar always been a frightenin' place. I been talkin' to ole man Robbin way back in slavery-time, 'en he tell me 'bout one night he been los' on de bee-tree track, an' when he find he-self he been in de bushes on the aige of de big sand-bar, an' he set down on a log to res' heself, an' de moon

been shinin' bright, an' while he settin' dere he look out on de sand-bar an' he seen a drove of owl walk out dere like a set of men, one big owl been wid dem. When dey got out a piece in de sand-bar dey all stan' up dere together, an' ain't move, an' atter while he seen a fox, seen a coon, seen a possum, an' seen a rabbit, all of 'em comin' dere an' get together nigh unto dem owl, 'en crow, jay-bird, snake, crawl out de water, all kinds of varmints been gathered around, an' while he settin' dere he say he see two woodpeckers come in wid a turkey buzzard an' dey march up dere in front of dem owl an' he set der an' watch 'em, an' dem owl helt a cote, just like people, an' dey 'scused de buzzard of eatin' bur rabbit brother. Bur Buzzard been a undertaker an' went to de settin' up dat night all night long, an' he look like he guine shed tear an' stan' roun' dere an' look mournful, an' bow he ball head, like bur rabbit brother ain't been nobody brother but he own, he look like he fret so. Next mornin' all de animals lef' to go to dey work an' lef' bur buzzard to bury bur rabbit brother, an' when dey come back dey fine out bur buzzard ain't bury him, but eat him. An' dey had a jay-bird 'scusin' bur buzzard, an' dey had varmint, an' had snake all for one kind of witness or anudder, an' lyin' every which-a-way, an' dey convict bur buzzard, an' dey pick out bur fox to execute him he got so much sharp ways an' he do so much low

trick, but bur fox mighty perticular 'bout what he do an' what he put he mout' on. Bur Fox he start to lef' an' dey axe him wuh he guine, an' he say, "ain't you hear dem dogs out dere in de woods, dat is wuh I guine."

An' nobody didn't do nuthen to bur buzzard, an' ain't never done nuthen to buzzard. Dat's why so much buzzard. Dey always gits off.

XXX. OLE MAN TOOGA'S CHILE
(A Tale of the Chain Gang.)

Josey Mammy: Is you hear 'bout ole man Tooga?

Scip: Wha' ail ole man Tooga?

Josey Mammy: Ain' nothin' ail he health, but he mine mighty sick wid worryation.

Voice: Wha' he worry 'bout? Worry ain' no nuse.

Josey Mammy: He worry 'bout he chile.

Voice: Wha' chile?

Josey Mammy: He worry 'bout Wash.

Tad: Wha' de matter ail Wash?

Josey Mammy: Nuff ail Wash. He done cross de path of de law an' de poor buckra got him.

Voice: How come de poor buckra got him?

Josey Mammy: De chain gang is he home now. Is you know wha' I mean?

Tad: Ef he ain' larn how to pray, now he time, for he show God guh wear suppen sides clothes.

Scip: Prayin', wha' he guh pray for? Mercy, he bes' save he breath. When God drap him in de han' of er cracker, he done wid him, he done quit noticin' prayer, Him an' he Son an' all un um. Dey got too much else to 'tend to. He mought pray to de cracker ef he wants to create a laugh an' game makin'. Luh him pray.

Josey Mammy: Son you knows a heap but you ain' know wuh ole man Tooga do an' wuh he say an' how he act wid dem cracker. Ole man Tooga full o' worryin' an' he ain' loss he mine yet an' he ain' loss he scheme.

Scip: Is you ever see a mice when de cat's got him? Schemin' helps him.

Tad: De cat know he business jes' a leetle better dan de mice.

Scip: An' de cracker know he business.

Voice: Josey Mammy, tell we.

Josey Mammy: When ole man Tooga visit de guard, he carry a fryin-size chicken to de head boss an' gee it to him, den he axe 'bout Wash, an' he tell ole man Tooga Wash is goin' to make a good prisoner. He say when he lef' de gang he goin' to be a good nigger or a dead nigger. He say Wash 'tend like he got de fever, but ain't nothin' ail him. He guh show him how he brokes em in. He say ole man Tooga ought to handle him dat a way when he raise him an' he would a been some service to him.

Voice: Wha' ole man Tooga say?

Scip: Wha' he kin say?

Josey Mammy: Ole man Tooga say he ain' nothin' but a nigger an' he never is been in no trouble an' he ain't set his self up to be equal wid white folks, an' he said he ain't know wha' to do to keep he chillun out o' trouble. He say he do he bes' an' he thankful for agvice from good white folks.

Scip: Well, he in de right place to git it.

Tad: Is he git it?

Josey Mammy: I ain' know 'bout agvice, but I know dem cracker brung Wash out an' chain he foots, shackles an' all to a stob in de groun'. Tear been runnin' down Wash' face an' sweat was bust out all over he fore head, an' he axe for mercy.

Scip: He axe for mercy?

Josey Mammy: He axe for mercy, an' dey throwed him down an' twis' him over so he can't move he foot an' one man put he foot on he neck an' de other man work on him wid a strop thick as a man's hand. Wash moan an' beg so hard he had tear in he voice, he prayed to he God an' call on he Pa an' he holler for he Ma, he cry like a sucklin' chile. He make a noise like a hurted beast, but it ain' do no good. One o' dem cracker kick him in de face an' de side two or three time, den ram he foot in Wash' mouth an' say, "Holler ef you wants to, gee him twice

as much." Den he call a trusty an' tell him to rub salt in he cuts an' atter dat dey put him back on de chain.

Voice: Wha' ole man Tooga say?

Tad: You talks like a fool. Wha' he kin say?

Josey Mammy: Ole man Tooga tell de guard he know bes' an' axe him please for God' sake don't cripple him kaze he want dis boy to work for him. He all he got to 'pend on, den he thank de boss an' tell him guh bring him another chicken, he think so much on him.

Voice: Wha' de boss say?

Josey Mammy: He say he guh turn him back a good nigger, an' ole man Tooga bow an' scrape an' guin him heap o' thanks an' tell him he's a white man an' he knows bes' an' he know he guh turn him back a good nigger.

Scip: He guh turn him back a nigger.

Voice: Ain' he already a nigger?

Scip: All I says is he guh turn him back a nigger, an' I ain' guh say no more.

XXXI. FINE MY CHILE

Voice: You ain' got no manners. Is you seed me today?

Hezekiah: See you today, en I ain't see you. I ain't know nothen 'bout no manners tonight, an' I ain't no manners, an' I ain't care nothen 'bout no manners.

Voice: How come, brother?

Hezekiah: I come from Dry Branch to Pea Ridge, and when I come against the Barrs Field by Miss Jimmie Crossin', a little ooman, with a check gingham dress, with a red handkerchief 'roun' her head and a big bunch of key hang from her apron, stan' in front of me an' I hail her, an' she say "Wey my chile?" An' she look at me, an' she act like she guine jine me. An' she ain't look natural, an' I move to walk and she walk 'side me an' she say "Wey my chile?" An' she ain't say nothen but "Wey my chile?" An' I walk fas', an' I run an' she run, an' I turn off Pea Ridge Crossing an' she riz' up 'afore me, an' she ain't tech de groun', an' she say, "Fine my chile!" an' she float way off in de air, an' atter she gone I hear in de bush, in de field an' in de air, in de cloud an' in de sky, I hear "Wey my chile?" "Fine my chile!" An' it ain't been natural an' it ain' been life, an' she ain't holler, an' she ain't cry. She just moan, "Wey my chile? Fine my chile"! It ain't been life, an' it might have been death, but it ain't been natural. My ears is bustin' an' my head is full, an' I ain't hear nothen' but de moanin' of de ooman, "Wey my chile? Fine my chile!"

An' I done hear it in de night when de sun is shet out, on de dark night and on de moon-lit night, dis ooman walk, an' dey ain't no ooman, an' dey ain't nothen but de onrestless sperrit, an' it walk from Pea

Ridge to Dry Branch, an' she always moan, an' the soun' of her voice an' de rattle of her key, an' her gingham dress an' her red handkerchief, an' de light of her eyes could be seen on de earth, an' de soun' of her voice could be heard in de skies, an' in de dark bushes, an' in de air, an' out in de night de sinful will hear, "Wey my chile? Fine my chile!"

Over de fields and across de woods, from Pea Ridge to Dry Branch, "Wey my chile? Fine my chile!"

XXXII. PURTTY LITTLE FOLKS

Old Rhody: Mornin'.

Voice: Good mornin' Aun' Rhody.

Old Rhody: You up soon, Bubber.

Voice: Yes, Aunt Rhody, I been up since fo' day.

Old Rhody: Wuh you see?

Voice: I see de sun rise.

Old Rhody: Is dat all you see? If you look close you see more'n sun rise.

Voice: What you talk 'bout Aun' Rhody, tell we?

Old Rhody: If you look close at dat time, 'twixt darkness an' daylight you see de purtty people an' curious little folks what's so perticular 'bout what dey do an' wey dey steps.

Voice: Who is dey, Aun' Rhody, tell we?

Old Rhody I ain't know who dey is, but dey is de little folks of de sperrit-world, de purtty little folks

an' dey don't do no harm, an' you see 'em 'twixt night an' mornin' an' dey walks on de leaves, an' if you look up in de tree you see 'em step from leaf to leaf, an' dey walk down de limbs on de leaf an' dey steps on dey toes like dey's dancin' an' like dey ain't know nothen but joy, an' dey come out of heben, an' dey walks on dey toes, an' dey steps from leaf to leaf, an' dey steps so light till dey walks on de spider webs an' de swings dey-self from stran to stran.

Fuh dey is de purtty little folks an' dey don't do nothen ugly an' dey don't walk on nothen ugly. Dey walks on de jue-drops, an' dey dances on de blossoms, an' dey ain't do no harm an' dey looks like dey come out of heben; for dey is de little folks, de purtty little folks, an' dey comes 'twixt night and mornin'; an' dey walks on de spider-webs an' dey home's in heben. Dey comes 'twixt darkness an' dawn an' 'pears for a short time, an' dey pass in de mist.

Fuh dey is de purtty little folks.

XXXIII. THE FALLING STAR

There is a superstition among the negroes of Lower Richland County that it is a great offense to point your hand at a falling star, the idea being that they come from heaven. I was walking down the road between Pea Ridge and Pine Bluff, and pointed my hand at a falling star and called an old negroes attention to it. He caught my hand, pulled it down, and said:

Brother, don' pint your han' at a fallin' star.

Jesus sets on he throne in heben, an' he watch all de night theu, an' he watch a sinful world, and den is de fallin' stars, an' Jesus weeps on he throne in heben, and dem is de tears of Jesus, fallin' for a sinful world.

Dem is de sparks of heben, dem is de fallin' stars, and dem is de tears of Jesus, fallin' on a sinful world. Don' pint your han' brother, don' pint your han,' for dem is de tears of Jesus, fallin' on a sinful world. Dem is de lights from de throne in heben, dem is de tears of Jesus.

Don' pint your han' Brother, don' pint your han' at a fallin' star.

XXXIV. JAY-BIRDS

Sam Leck: Bubber, where you been?

Boy: I been back in de woods wid my tap-stick, trying to kill a jay-bird.

Sam Leck: You ain't want kill no jay-bird, ain't you know jay-bird bad luck to kill?

Voice: Tell us about it, Leck?

Sam Leck: Jay-bird is a mighty busy bird. When you see him in dis worl' he here fer rest and fer git wood. Every Friday jay-bird fly to hell and carry wood fer de devil. If it ain't been fer jay-bird dey ain't been no room in hell fer sinners. Jay-bird keeps de fires of hell burnin', and you know he totes a heep of wood as sinful as dis worl' is. No

Bubber, you ain't want kill no jay-bird. It is bad luck! It is bad luck! Is you hear how stressful jay-bird holler? Is you know wuh make he holler' stressful? Case he see so much stressful sights. When jay-bird fly to hell atter he t'row he wood on de fire he fly up on de high rocks and rest he-self, an' pleasure he-self, lookin' down on de burnin' sinners, set and laugh, and make game. Jay-bird like a man wid blood on he hans'. Dey ain't no rest fer him. Man got blood on he hans', jay-bird got blood in he heart. Jay-bird a 'stressful bird an' he see some 'stressful sights. No Bubber, don't kill no jay-bird! Don't kill no jay-bird, fer it's bad luck.

Jay-bird is a 'stressful bird, an' he see some 'stressful sights. He see some 'stressful sights.

XXXV. JACK-MA-LANTERN

Jake: Who you reckon dat walk up and down dat ditch an' 'bout dat mash?

Bruzer: I ain't know.

Jake: Ain't you see 'em wid dat light bob up and down like dey lost sumpen?

Bruzer: I ain't know who dey is, dey must be sumpen perticular make 'em walk all around in de rain an' brier. I see 'em but I ain't know wuh ail 'em.

Hooten: You sure God ain't know. Dat ain't no people. Dat's a Jack-ma-lantern an' you best l'um

'lone. You ain't know what kind of danger dey lead you in if you follow 'em.

Jake: Wuh make dey lead you in danger. Ain't you kin stop follow 'em when you see danger.

Hooten: If dey gits a holt on you and you follow 'em, it don't lead you to no good. When you starts to follow, one mind will tell you l'um 'lone and turn back, and another mind will tell you follow 'em, and you follow 'em.

Jake: What's a Jack-ma-lantern?

Hooten: A Jack-ma-lantern is a sperrit. It is a evil sperrit. It is ole' folks. Sinful ole folks. It is folks wuh ain't 'lowed in heben and can't get in hell, and dey punishment is to wander in de bad places and on de bad night, and dey business is enticing mens to follow 'em, an' dey ain't got no res', les' dey entice mens to lef' de right road. Is you 'member Ole man Lunnen? Well you know he been a ole man, and he been wise, and ole man Lunnen tell me, he say, one time he been walking down de road and he been wid dis same ole man, July Uncle, dey call him "Hock," and say, him and Hock walk down dis road and dey see a light walking right out in dat dere mash and Hock say he guh see who it is and ole man Lunnen say he try to 'suade Hock to stay in de road. Hock say he ain't scared he guin dere and ole man Lunnen say he ain't guh have nothin' to do wid it, and Hock left him, and ole man Lunnen say de

last time he see Hock dat night Hock been fallin' in de hole and scramblin' in de brier, and dat night Hock ain't come home and den dey search for him and dey find him that night back in de high grass and brier on Hog-Pen-Gut, and he stan' in de mud up to he knee, and he reared back wid he head pulled back holdin' both han' out in front of him like he tryin' to 'fend hisself and he look in he face and he eye wide open and de look on he face were terrible, like it were froze, and he put han' on him and he war stiff dead.

XXXVI. OLE MAN ROUSE

Cricket: Fishin' ain't seems to be right. I been fishin' all day and catch heap of fish 'en I try to catch coota but I ain't ketch 'em. Everything look wrong and everything been wrong. The water ain't look right, an' the sky ain't look right, an' I ain't like the soun' in the trees, soun' like de win' come theu de tree, soun' like I hear a voice, an' dey ain't no voice an' dey ain't no win', an' everywhere I go, everywhere I look I think I see sumpen an' dey ain't nuthen. Every cypress tree look like it guin raise up an' walk off or say somethin'. Dey is all kind of noise everywhere, an' dey ain't no noise. De sky look yaller an' de water look yaller. Everything look yaller an' it ain't yaller. Everything look like a sturbance an' it ain't no sturbance. I ain't know wuh it is, but it feel like

sumpen guin bus' loose an' I look over on a log an' I see a lot of yaller bellies, an' while I look I see a man put he han' up out de water an' lif' hesself up on de log. Look like he stoop over an' he head ben' down, an' I see him stretch heself an' draw heself up, an' I get a little closer, an' I look and it ain't a man, it a coota, an' I know a yaller belly don't get dat big, an' it ain't no other kind of coota sets on a log, an' I gets closer an' de big coota steps off de log an' wey he steps in de water he don' make no stirbance an' he don't make no soun'. He don't make no riffle, an' de water smooth as glass, an' I looks at de little yallow bellies an' dey ain't dere, an' I turns roun' wid my boat an' as I pass out I see a lizzard run in a hollow tree an' he turn roun' an' peep out an open he mout' and laugh, an' I ain't know if he a lizzard, an' I ain't know if he laugh, en I come out, an' I feel like I ain't livin'.

Peter: I ain't never think too much of fishin' here in de Big Cypress.

Voice: Wuh make?

Peter: Everything you see here ain't sumpen. Everything you hear ain't sumpen. It ain't natural. Cricket ain't see no coota, but Cricket see a man. Dat man was ole Man Rouse. Ole Man Rouse wuh a white man, an' he live in slavery-time. He ain't had no heart when he sober, en when he drunk God knows what he had. When he git mad at a nigger heh wey

he punish him. He punish him in slavery time, an' he punish him in freedom, an' here in Big Cypress is wey he punish he niggers, wey he drown 'em, en one time he come here fishin'. He been out on dat log an' de niggers push him off, an' he clim' back, an' dey kept on pushin' him off till he ain't clim' back; an' he sperrit live in Big Cypress.

XXXVII. IF YOU WANT TO FIND JESUS

A preacher in Charleston was holding a revival and he had one text he preached. Every night he said his text, "Well, Sisters and brothers, my subject tonight as before, I usually preaches every night one thing, I preaches one chapter about gainin' sinners, and it is my work to go out sinner hunting and devil driving."

And the Sisters say to him, "Yes, Buddy, that is what we want, to drive the devil. God send you here." "Yes," he says, "I want to gain sinners for the Kingdom of God, and my subject will be tonight my standby as before, 'sinners, ef you wants to find Jesus, come on the Lord's side.' "

And he was preaching that way every night, and a little boy got to studying devilment. They had a little glass on the altar where the preacher drank to clear his throat. And the little boy went and set a glass of whiskey up there. And he start his text that night. And after a while he went to clear his throat, and he

missed the water and got hold of the whiskey glass, and he got to feeling good and commenced to preach sure enough then, and he said, "Sinners, ef you wants to find Jesus, come on the Lord's side." The Sisters moaning over there in the corner "Um-m-m-m, um-m-m-m, tell it, Brother, tell it. If you wants to find Jesus, come on the Lord's side."

He felt like a drink again and he took that same glass and drank it about half way, and he start sure enough, "Sinners, I says, if you wants to find Jesus come on the Lord's side, come on the Lord's side." And the Sisters started to moaning. And the little boy went over in the corner where he had a banjo, and he saw the preacher had took about half of it and he took his little banjo and he hit it, tum, lum, tum, lum, tum, lum. And the preacher listened over there, and that sounded good when he was drinking, and he reached back and he got that glass and dreen it, and the sisters got to moaning sure enough and the little boy thought he had the preacher about right and he started to picking right. Tum, lum, tum, lum, tum, a lum tum and turned the church into a dance and they all got to dancing with the music.

XXXVIII. THE GHOSTS OF ELM SAVANNAH

Tad: Paul, where do you live now?
Paul: I stays up at de old street.
Tad: What old street?

Paul: The old street up to 'Elm Savannah.'

Tad: Buddy, I thought you ain't been stayed up to de big house.

Paul: Wuh make?

Tad: No, my Jesus, No, Buddy, I ain't want nothen to do wid dat place. No my brother, I done got my belly full on it.

Paul: Cap'n Bob stay dere, 'en he say he fare mighty well, 'en he been here a long time. Coase I ain't know too much 'bout de big house. I ain't visit there too frequent, 'cep' in de day-time.

Tad: My Brother, dat what I talk 'bout. I visit there in de Big Day, 'en dem white folks was standin' on de front piazza shooten' peoples cows on dey oats. Dey been shootin' cows and drinkin' liquor en tellin' tales 'en cussin' scandalous. Great God! Dem sure is bad folks. And when I been standin' there everything been still and dey ain't been a breath of air stirrin' 'en I see de front gate open. It opened slow and wide, like a man han' been on it, en' I ain't see de han', 'en it stay open long 'nuf for somebody to walk in, an den I see de gate close, 'en a man han' close it, an' I ain't see de man, an' I ain't seen he han', an' I tell Cap'n Bob 'bout it, an' he say, "go 'way fum here an' shet you lyin' mout'. I'm tired you niggers come 'roun' here an' create stirbance an' tell lie" 'en I say 'I ain't tell no lie. Jesus my Judge. I seen 'it. 'En Cap'n Bob say, "Bubber, you

seen it, an' I seen it, an' I see it all de time, an' I see more'n it, an' it ain't nothin' to talk 'bout. It ain't been nobody but ole Marster, an' he visit here frequent."

Paul: How much time you see dat gate open?

Tad: I seen it one time, an' I lef' Buddy, I lef', 'en I ain't tarry.

XXXIX. THE CROW

He set to preaching a text every night 'bout gainen sinners. And he was preaching several years and preaching one text, and said to the congregation, he says, "Sisters and brothers, dey come an' remark, 'some people say you preach one text all of de time,' but when John was preaching on de river Jerden he did'nt have but one text, and his text was, Repent and be baptized, an' dat was his one subject. Atter dat John would go preachin' and preachin' until Jesus, the Master, come to him to be baptized. An' my subject is one text, I don't preach but one text, Sisters and Brothers, and that is, Sinners, you want to find Jesus; go down below. My subject is, you want to find Jesus; go down below." Old Sister answered him in the corner, "Yes, Buddy, dat is de way I fine him I went down below. Dat is what I say. My standpoint is if you want Jesus, go down below! Go down below!"

And while he was preaching every night dere was a crow got familiar with de text, an' he flewed up in the loft over de pulpit, and he heard him preachin' his text dat night, "Sinners, if you want to find Jesus, go down below! Go down below!" After the crow got familiar with it the crow flewed out de loft of de church an' lit on de altar and turn he head one side an' look up at de preacher, an' say, "Go down below," an' de preacher went right down below. He jump over de altar and de people screamed an' crowded one another, and in getting away dey jumped out of windows, so dat dey got all mixed up under de quire in front of de door, an' de crow got frightened hisself and flewed across de church an' lit on a old lady's shoulder, who could not get out, an' he look up in de old lady face an' say: "Go down below!" An' she said, "Do Bubber, I jest come here on a visit. Dis ain't my church."

An' atter that he change he tex'.

XL. PRIMUS

Scip: Dey put the fixings on Primus today.

Voice: Wuh he do?

Scip: Dey scuse 'im of stealin' two automobile tires.

Voice: Tell we.

Scip: Primus see a automobile in de ditch' side de road an' stole two tires off en it. He ain't steal 'em

good 'fore he sell 'em. De police ketch 'im an' de judge fine 'em twenty fi' dollahs.

Voice: Who tire dey been?

Scip: Ain' nobody know.

Voice: Primus show is lucky. How come de judge luh 'im off dat easy? Look like he headed for de gang.

Scip: De judge is a good man. He say he temper he justice wid mercy, but he got to broke up stealin'.

Voice: Wuh dey do wid de tire ef dey ain' know who dey b'long to?

Scip: De judge put one on he car, an' de police put one on he car.

Voice: An' Primus pay de twenty fi' dollahs?

Scip: Ain't Primus stole de tires?

XLI. JUMPING-GUT

Scene: Mt. Moriah Church.

Rev. Lowman: Brothers and Sisters, I is here today before God an' he chillun to pronounce de death of Yandy Yow.

Voices in Congregation: Yes, tell us, Brother.

Rev. Lowman: Yes, Brothers and Sisters, Yandy die, and he die wid a 'ooman in he mine an' eagle flop in he face.

Congregation: Flop in he face,
Flop in he face, yes,
Flop in he face.

Rev. Lowman: An he met a eagle on Jumpin' Gut.

Voices: Jumpin' Gut,
Jumpin' Gut,
Jumpin' Gut.
An' a eagle flop in he face,
Flop in he face,
Flop in he face,
On Jumpin' Gut.

Rev. Lowman: Yes, Sister, a eagle fly in he face on Jumpin' Gut.

Sisters, on Jumpin' Gut! on Jumpin' Gut.
Flewed in he face on Jumpin' Gut!
An' he fought on de road from Jumpin' Gut, an' he fought wid a eagle, an' he died on Jumpin' Gut,
An' a eagle flop in he face.

Sisters: Yes!

Voices from Various parts of the Congregation:
Flop in he face!
Flop in he face!
Flop in he face!
On Jumpin' Gut!

Oh, Lord, a eagle flewed in he face,
Flewed in he face,
Flewed in he face,
On Jumpin' Gut,
On Jumpin' Gut,
On Jumpin' Gut.

XLII. CAZENOVA

Jube: Wey Mensa?

Sam: You ain' know Mensa, is you? If you is know him you know he ain't gur set round here in dis swamp an' waste he time wid a passel er mens. He gone to er entertainment.

Jube: Wuh kind of entertainment?

Sam: Dey got a party for de preacher, him an' he young wife.

Jake: Buddy, I'm wid you. Wuh fuh kind er man is Mensa? He ain't look to me like he bus' he heart out runnin' atter preacher.

Sam: He ain't lossin' no time runnin' atter preacher. He ain't lossin' no time wid no mens. Mensa's a hawk, swift as lightnin', wicked as pizen, sure as death. Mens likes him an' wimmen b'longs to him wid he soft way, an' he bad ways. He ain't look like a panter for nuthen. The Bible say God make us, but when I see Mensa sumpen tell me maybe de debel have he han' in it. I ain't know but he sure is got some frightenin' ways.

Lias: Wuh make you all back-bite Mensa? Ain't you say he gone to er church entertainment? He mought be seekin' for de light.

Sam: Brother, he mought be seekin' for de light. I done tell you who de entertainment for. I done

tell you Mensa gur be dere, an' my advice to dat preacher is you better skip. Bur Rabbit, de ole field is a fire and de hawk is here.

XLIII. SPIRIT DOGS AND BARKING SNAKES

Preb: (Enters scratched and bleeding, clothes torn, muttering:) Huh, pup, huh! Huh, pup, huh!

Voice: Wha' ail you, Preb?

Preb: Ain't nothin' ail me. You must be ailin' yourself. Is you blind? Can't you see dem dogs?

Second Voice: Preb must be lossin' he mind.

Preb: What make I loss my mind?

Voice: How come you to call dog when dey ain't no dog? How you say you see dog when dey ain't no dog, how come?

Preb: Brother, if you been wid me you see dog, 'en you see more'n dog? You see snake, an' hear 'em bark, bark like dog. I come out 'er mill pasture an' I hear dog bark, an' I look, an' heap 'er little dog an' snake all tangled up 'twixt my feets an' hit look like I guine step on 'em, an' I ain't step on 'em, an' all down mill-dam dem dog bark and snake tangle up 'twixt my feets, an' I lef de mill-dam an' I to'd out theu de brier an' dey kept wid me, an' dey tangle up 'twixt my feets an' dey bark, an' dey come here wid me, an' you ain't hear 'em bark, an' you ain't see 'em. Ain't nobody see 'em but me. Ain't no-

body hear 'em but me, an' dey tangle up 'twixt my feets.

Spencer: Brother, you see 'em an' I see 'em. Dem is sperrit dogs, an' dey run dese woods an' dey run wid de barkin' snakes, and dey run on certain night an' dey wait dey own time an' dey run in mill-pasture an' Black Lake, an' dey home is God knows way, an' dey is a sign, a onlucky sign, which pass dis way 'afore de earth-quake, an' dey come here wid de storm, an' 'afore death, an' 'afore war, and it is a sign of 'stress. Dey is de barkin' snakes an' sperrit dogs, an' dey travel in de night of storm, an' dey travel in de night of 'stress, an' dey tangles 'twixt de feets of men, and all men is feared ur de sperrit dogs an' de barkin' snakes. Dey come 'afore death an' in time of 'stress, an' dey tangles 'twixt de feets of men.

XLIV. DEATH OWL

Long Jim: Hush your fuss.

Voice: Wuh fuh we hush we fuss?

Long Jim: You ain't hear dat det' owl, is you?

Voice: We hear him. What dat got to do wid we fuss? Det' owl got he mout', we got we mout', det' owl holler, we laugh.

Long Jim: Dis ain't no time to talk about det' owl got he mout' and you got you mout', when det' owl holler you laugh, when you laugh det' owl holler.

Voice: How come, brother, you ain't want we laugh when det' owl holler, tell we.

Long Jim: You make fuss, you ain't know wuh fuh you make fuss, det' owl know wuh he do. When det' owl holler somebody guh dead, somebody sperrit guh enter de sky, somebody sperrit guh pass in de night. Don't you laugh and don't you holler, an' don't you make game at a det' owl, fuh when det' owl holler it's a warning, somebody soul guh enter de sky, somebody guh flap he wings across de burnin' lake. It ain't no fun, and it ain't no joke, and it ain't nothin' fuh make game. Det' owl ain't no owl, and he ain't no bird. Det' owl de lost sperrit of a lonesome soul. He de scarified sperrit. No, Bubber, don't kill no det' owl. Don't kill no det' owl fer it's bad luck. Det' owl 'stressful bird, and he see some 'stressful sights. An' he ain't got no fren' an' he ain't got no company but de partin' sperrits, an' he fly wid 'em to de far shore. He rest in de hollow tree, an' he live in de night, an' he visit on de far shore. He de voice of de onrestless sperrit, he de soun' of death, an' he ain't nothen fer ter make game at. He de onrestless sperrit an' he fly with the partin' sperrits to de far shore an' de soun' of he voice is a notice of sorrow an' it's answer is weeping. He ain't nothen fer make game at. He ain't nothen fer pleasure, for he voice is de soun' of sorrow, an' de answer is tears.

XLV. DE LAW GOT SIMON

Scip: Gentlemen's!

Voices: How do, Scip?

Scip: Sorter slow.

Voice: Is you well?

Scip: Middlin', is you hear de news?

Voice: We ain't hear no news, tell us, brother?

Scip: Well, de law got Simon.

Voice: Who got Simon?

Scip: De law got him.

Voice: How come, what he do?

Scip: Kilt a white 'ooman.

Voice: How come he kilt a white 'ooman?

Scip: I ain't know, and if I know I ain't say. All I say Simon kilt a white 'ooman an' de law got him. I see him an' he face twis' an' swell up, an' he eye red, an' he ain't say nothin' an' de law got him. He ain't say nothin' kaze he heart black an' he mind white an' de law got Simon.

Voice: Have mercy!

Second Voice: Dey ain't no mercy.

Third Voice: Jesus!

Fourth Voice: God have mercy!

Scip: Ain't I tell you de law got Simon?

Old Daniel: Simon ain't nothin'. He ain't bird-dog an' he ain't houn'. He ain't nothin'.

Voice: How come Simon ain't nothin'?

Old Daniel: Simon Daddy white, Simon' Mammy black, Simon ain't nothin.' He got a nigger heart an' a white man head, an' dat's a mighty poor mixtry. What Simon head say Simon heart ain't know, an' what Simon heart say Simon head tangle up. He ain't white an' he ain't black, an' he ain't nothin'. White man spiles the nigger in him an' nigger spiles the white man. He born tangle up an' he guh die tangle up, an' all I can say is God forgive he Daddy and God love he Mammy an' God have mercy on Simon. He ain't nigger, en he ain't white, an' he ain't nothin'. He born tangle up.

Scip: Well, all I say is, de law got Simon.

XLVI. A FOOL NIGGER

Harriet: Tad, wey you been?

Tad: I been over to de mill.

Harriet: Who you see dere?

Tad: A passel of niggers. Is you hear de news?

Harriet: Wuh news?

Tad: Blake an' Louisa done part. Blake is such a fool. You ain' hear de fun, is you?

Harriet: What fun?

Tad: Dat one twis' horn cow of Blake's hook Louisa, an' she been moanin' an' groanin' an' Blake, a ole fool, send for a Doctor, a nigger, an' when he come instead of he axe Louisa how she feel an' 'zamine her, he went out in de yard an 'zamine de cow, an'

den he went to de pizer where Louisa been layin' on a pallet an' he say, 'Sister, I think your cow'll git all right. She don't seems to have nothin' serious,' an Louisa all swell up an' git so hot about it she run de Doctor off, an' Blake tried to 'suade her he send for a cow Doctor kase a cow hook her, then she run Blake. A fool nigger show is a fool.

XLVII. THE TWO DUCKS

Dere was er ole man, you know, he had a daughter, and he tell he daughter he had invited a preacher to he house, and he say, "Daughter, I guine down to de train to meet de Reverend, and bake two ducks and leave 'em dere for him, don't tech 'em." And she said, "No, I ain't guh tech 'em." And he go to de train to meet de Reverend, and de gal taste de ducks, and dey taste good, and she taste 'em till she taste 'em all up.

And atter de ole man come, he never look in de place wey he had he ducks, and he went in de other room to sharpen he knife on the oil stove, and de preacher was settin' in de room wid de gal. She knewed her papa was guine to whip her, and she started to snifflin' 'bout it, and de preacher say, "What is de matter, daughter?" And she say, "Dat's all de fault I find wid papa,—papa go invite preachers to he house and go and sharpen he knife to cut off both dey years." And de Reverend say, "What is

dat, daughter?" And de gal say, "Yes, papa invite preachers here all de time and cut off both dey years." And he say, "Daughter, han' me my hat quick." And de gal guin hem he hat and he run out. And she call her papa and say, "Papa, de preacher got both de ducks and gone." And he run to de door and holler to him and say, "Hey, hey, wey you guine? Come back here!" And de preacher answer him and say, "Damned ef you'll git either one of dese."

And he raise a dust de way he flewed down de road. And de ole tales tell you dat womens has always been sharper dan mens.

XLVIII. THE MULE AND THE OX

A ox and a mule was workin' together in de same wagon. One day de mule say to de ox, "Look here, Ber Ox, you got to do better, you let me do all de work. If you ain't do better, you guh be kilt, kaze I heared de butcher talkin' to our boss today, and he say, 'Dat ox would make mighty fine beef, I would like to buy him from you.' Ox, if you don't change your ways, you guh be kilt."

And de ox say to de mule, "I ain't guh change my ways for nobody. I'm guh keep on jes like I always been doin', and you jes 'member dis, if I is kilt, my hide will be a terrance to you de balance of your days."

And ever since den mens have been whippin' mules wid ox hides.

XLIX. THAT QUART KEPT ON BECKONING ME

Tad: I done laugh till I mighty nigh bus open.

Scip: Wuh make you laugh?

Tad: Jim.

Scip: Wuh Jim?

Tad: Ole Crazy Jim wuh works for de white folks, an' be ain' so crazy nuther.

Voice: Tell we 'bout it.

Tad: Well, de white folks come down to Congaree wid striped pants on an' a jim swinger coat dat wouldn't take a lick off'n him, wid a red flower in he button hole. He look so good he look like he guh git married or serve God, or like he guh do sompen you can't put no 'pendence in, an' he called Jim an' he said, "Jim, you been a faithful servant to me an' I wants to show you my 'preciation by presenting you with this little token of my esteem," den he hand Jim a quart of liquor, an' he says, "Jim, I want you to take charge of my kitchen tomorrow. I has some distinguished ladies and gentlemens comin' as my guests. I want you to cook breakfast an' prepare my Christmas dinner." Jim thank him an' tell him he look like the president of the Nunited States and tell him he guh do some cookin' ain't nobody never see

nothin' like it 'efore, an' dey both went off perfectly satisfied, 'cept I ain't blame Jim for looking satisfied.

Tad: When breakfast come, ain't everybody satisfied.

Voice: How come?

Tad: Jim been in dat kitchen at sun-up. He 'larmed de neighborhood singin' hymns. He woked up everybody in de big house, an' de boss was rollin' 'round so uneasy he look like he have fleas on him. He act like he scared to git out er bed. Ole Miss ain't been able to stand it; she jump out er bed an' dash down to de kitchen, an' when she git dere Jim been makin' batter cakes on de kitchen shelf an' tryin' to turn 'em over. He say dey look like dey won't brown, an' Ole Miss been hot, she say, "What are this? I ain't goin' to have no such doings. What will de Bishop think?" An' she run Jim off. But dat ain't all. Dere ain't nobody dere can cook no Christmas dinner. An' de boss say he very much disturbed dat dis is a most unfortunate state of affairs.

Voice: Wuh he do?

Tad: De white folks git so unrestless till dey went down to see Jim an' axe him can't he git he self together an' cook dat dinner an' wuh make him act so bad.

Voice: Wuh Jim say?

Tad: Jim say he wants to do he duty an' keep he promise, an' when he sing hymns he serves God, an' de Missus hurt he feelins when she say he ain't know nothin' 'bout makin' no batter cakes an' he ain't fitten to cook for a bishop. Atter while him an' de white folks make it all right, an' he say wuh make him act dat er way he tooken dat liquor home an' teched it two or three times, an' every time he tech it an' went to 'tend to he business dat bottle er liquor beckoned him, an' time he go an' tech it an' lef' it would beckon him again, an' atter he touch it four or five times more, it kept on beckonin' him, an' he got to studyin' 'bout it, an' he say he make up he mind he guh let nothin' beckon him an' keep on beckon' him dat er way widout he geein' answer, so he just went back dere an' finish drink up dat quart.

Scip: Brother, he ain't de onliest one a quart er liquor beckons to, an' most un 'em gees answer.

XLVII. DON'T 'STURB A HOUN'

Don't 'sturb a houn' when he is howlin',
When he is howlin' at the moon.
Fer he sees sumpen, and he knows sumpen,
An' it mought be the face of God, shinin' in de moon.
Fer he sees sumpen, an' he knows sumpen!
An' he can't tell it.
Don't 'sturb a houn' when he is howlin',

When he is howlin' at the moon.
Fer dey's sumpen on he mine,
An' dey's sumpen in he heart,
An' dey's sorrow in he voice.
Don't sturb a houn' when he is howlin',
When he is howlin' at de moon.
Fer he is lookin' in the face of God,
An' he can't tell it,
An' der is trouble in he soul,
An' der is sorrow in he voice,
An' he can't tell it.
Don't sturb a houn' when he is howlin',
When he is howlin' at the moon.
Fer he sees sumpen, and he knows sumpen,
An' he can't tell it,
When he's howlin, when he's howlin' at the moon.

LI. DON'T YOU PLAY WID MARRIED WIMMENS

Don't you play wid married wimmens,
For dere's 'nuff of other wimmens, willin' wimmens, in de worl',
For de worl' is full of wimmens, willin' wimmens.
If you has your wimmens, don't have 'em roun' your home.

For de worl' is full of wimmens, willin' wimmens,
Anywhere you go.

Don't play wid chillun,
Take 'em when dey's grown,
An' take 'em 'way from home,
For de worl' is full of wimmens, willin' wimmens,
An' take 'em far from home.

Keep your business in your mine,
An' don't tell it to your fren',
For de worl' is full of wimmens, willin' wimmens,
An' if you take 'em, take 'em far from home.

Don't take 'em in de daylight,
Fine 'em in de night,
An' lef' 'em where you fine 'em,
For de worl' is full of wimmens, willin' wimmens,
An' you better take 'em far, far from home.

LII. TAD'S ADVICE TO HIS SON

Don't trust a 'ooman,
She's a curious thing,
When she's right she'll die to save you,
An' when she's wrong she'll die to git you.

There's danger in de trut',
When a lie will do de work,
Tell it to a 'ooman,
Tell her what she loves to hear.

Tell her she's de only 'ooman,
Tell her dat your heart is bursting,
An' your head is swimmin',
An' dere ain't no other wimmens.

What a 'ooman loves to hear is soft and sweet,
Dere's danger in de trut',
An' a lie will do de work.
A lie will do de work wid a 'ooman,
An' de trut' is sure to hurt.

When you're talking to a 'ooman,
Talk as soft as a breath of air creepin' t'ru a crack.
Be as calm as a mouse crawlin' on a carpet.
An' when you're breakin' loose from her,
A lie will do de work.
Take her in your arms, and whisper in her ear.

Be gentle as a ray of moon-light fallin' on a flower.
Be tender as a mother's song, floating on de air.
If you know'd it you'd be careful in a bed of rattle-snakes,
So be careful when a 'ooman's near.

Soft talk is cheap,
It ain't cost you nothen

An' when you dealin' wid a 'ooman,
Dere's danger in de trut',
An' a lie will do de work.

LIII. OLD SISTER'S ADVICE TO HER DAUGHTERS

Don't trus' mens,
But keep your feets flat,
Flat upon de groun'

Don't listen to no easy talk,
Don't l'em 'suade you,
For de worl' is full of lying mens,
Just keep your feets flat,
Flat upon de groun'.

De Bible says dey all is liars,
And Jesus knows 'tis true,
De more fair dey talk,
De worse dey is.
Sister, keep your feets flat,
Flat upon de groun'.

Don't l'em 'suade you,
Don't listen to no easy talk,
If dey axe a unfair question,
Keep your feets flat,
Flat upon de groun',
For dey is devils,

An' dey is atter you,
So keep your feets flat,
Flat upon de groun'.

Don't you risk 'em,
An' don't you trus' 'em,
For if you listen to dey honey
You might not keep your feets flat,
Flat upon de groun'.
For dey'll kiss you and dey'll love you,
An' talk as soft and pretty as de jue
upon a flower,
But dey'll lef' you wid a laugh,
If you don't keep your feets flat,
Flat upon de groun'.

LIV. JESUS HAD TROUBLE ALL OVER THE WORLD

Jesus had trouble all over the world,
With Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel,
Jesus had trouble, Jesus had trouble,
Trouble all over the world,
Oh, Lord! Save my soul.

Jesus had trouble all over the world,
With the flood, Noah and the Ark,
Jesus had trouble, Jesus had trouble,
Trouble all over the world,
Oh, Lord! Save my soul.

Jesus had trouble all over the world,
With Shem, Ham and Japhet,
Jesus had trouble, Jesus had trouble,
Trouble all over the world,
Oh, Lord! Save my soul.

Jesus had trouble all over the world,
With Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,
Jesus had trouble, Jesus had trouble,
Trouble all over the world,
Oh, Lord! Save my soul.

Jesus had trouble all over the world,
With the children in the wilderness,
Jesus had trouble, Jesus had trouble,
Trouble all over the world,
Oh, Lord! Save my soul.

Jesus had trouble all over the world,
With Absolum, David and Joab,
Jesus had trouble, Jesus had trouble,
Trouble all over the world,
Oh, Lord! Save my soul.

Jesus had trouble all over the world,
With the high Priests in the temple,
Jesus had trouble, Jesus had trouble,
Trouble all over the world,
Oh, Lord! Save my soul.

Jesus had trouble all over the world,
With Jezebel, Jonah and Judas,
Jesus had trouble, Jesus had trouble,
Trouble all over the world,
Oh, Lord! Save my soul.

Jesus had trouble all over the world,
With Delilah, Saul and Samson,
Jesus had trouble, Jesus had trouble,
Trouble all over the world,
Oh, Lord! Save my soul.

Jesus had trouble all over the world,
With Herod and his avenging angel,
Jesus had trouble, Jesus had trouble,
Trouble all over the world,
Oh, Lord! Save my soul.

Jesus had trouble all over the world,
With John the Baptist and Salome,
Jesus had trouble, Jesus had trouble,
Trouble all over the world,
Oh, Lord! Save my soul.

Jesus had trouble all over the world,
With Lazarus, Dives and Pilate,
Jesus had trouble, Jesus had trouble,
Trouble all over the world,
Oh, Lord! Save my soul.

Jesus had trouble all over the world,
With the Philistines, the Gentiles and the Jews,
Jesus had trouble, Jesus had trouble,
Trouble all over the world,
Oh, Lord! Save my soul.

Jesus had trouble all over the world,
At the wedding with the water and the wine,
Jesus had trouble, Jesus had trouble,
Trouble all over the world,
Oh, Lord! Save my soul.

Jesus had trouble all over the world,
With Peter and the Cross on the Mount,
Jesus had trouble, Jesus had trouble,
Trouble all over the world,
Oh, Lord! Save my soul.

Jesus had trouble all over the world,
On the Cross with the thieves and the thorns,
Jesus had trouble, Jesus had trouble,
Trouble all over the world,
Oh, Lord! Save my soul.

Jesus had trouble all over the world,
With the liars, Annanias and Sapphira,
Jesus had trouble, Jesus had trouble,
Trouble all over the world,
Oh, Lord! Save my soul.

Jesus had trouble all over the world,
With the virgins, the wise and the foolish,
Jesus had trouble, Jesus had trouble,
Trouble all over the world,
Oh, Lord! Save my soul.

WORD LIST

a: have, as in "must a wrop he arm" for "must have wrapped his arm." Often a slurring sound of indefinite, or no independent, meaning.

agvice: advice.

aige: edge.

ambier: tobacco juice or spittle from a pipe.

angled up: mixed up, confused.

atter: after.

ax: axe, ask.

buckra: white; white man, or white men. Used without qualification it means upper class white men, but "poor buckra" are crackers, poor white trash, the lowest kind of white men. This word is of African origin and is used by Negroes of the African coast and the West Indies. In the language of the Calabar Coast *buckra* means "demon, a powerful and superior being."

Bullace: the wild muscadine grape vine.

bus': break; hit.

ceitful: deceitful. (First syllables are often dropped.)

cepen: except, except that.

chune: tune.

clam: (sometimes *clumb*): climbed.

coase: of course.

compersation: conversation.

Congaree: the Congaree swamps lie on both sides of the Congaree River a few miles from Columbia, South Carolina. They vary in width from seven to twelve miles, and extend along the river about forty miles. A series of other swamps continue below them for a hundred miles or so toward the sea. Congaree is possibly the last surviving word of a lost language, the speech of the vanished Congaree Indians who once inhabited the region. There are no more Congaree Indians living, but many of the Negroes of this district plainly have Indian blood in them.

conscious: conscience.

coolin-board: the wooden board on which a corpse lies during the wake or "settin-up."

coota: terrapin or fresh water turtle.

cote: court.

cracker: A poor white man. According to the traditional origin of this word, the country people used to drive their ox teams to town wielding long whips or "crackers."

dan: than. ("Th" at the beginning of a word is often replaced by "d.")

dassent: dared not.

dat: that; that is. Copulative and auxiliary verbs are often omitted. For example, "Dat wey I ben," for "That (is) where I (have) been."

de: the.

dem: them, those.

den: then.

dere: there.

det' owl: death owl. There are many owls in the Congaree.

dey: they; there.

diff'unt: different.

dis here: this.

do Bubber, do Jesus, etc.: A common exclamation. In this use *do* has no independent meaning.

dreen: drain.

duenst: during.

eber: ever. (The letter "v" is often pronounced "b," as in *heben* for "heaven.")

ef: if. The same Negro will often use the regular form, "if." This is true of many dialect forms.

egg 'um on: urge them on, incite them.

'em: them.

en: and.

er: of; an indefinite slurring sound used at will for many verb forms, especially "have," "was," "were," "is"; often means "a" and sometimes does duty for "is a"; in some phrases a syllable without independent meaning, as in *dis er way,* meaning "this way."

every which er way: in every direction, everywhere.
fice dogs: mongrel dogs of mixed breed and poor quality.
fine: find. The story "Fine my chile" has been told around Gadsden, South Carolina, for a hundred years to the certain knowledge of the author. The little old woman with the keys is still seen frequently near Gadsden, though the author has never had that good fortune. According to legend she was a housekeeper for the "white folks," and her only child was burned to death.
Free Issue: the son of a white mother and a Negro father. By law, in slavery time, no child of a white woman could be a slave; he was a free issue. Some of these same darkies are still living and the term is still used. They often have gray or yellow eyes; hence the term "goose-eye yaller nigger."
fren: friend.
f'um: from.
fuse: refuse.
gee: give. (See *guin.*)
geein: giving.
go down below: the author does not know what this expression means. He uses it just as he heard it.
gree: agree.
guin: Give, gave. (The pronunciation of this word varies and is difficult to indicate. It is often more like "geeun," "gean," or merely "gee.")
guine: going, is going.
gur: (often *guh*): going, is going to, are going to. Never used in the sense of going to a place, but as an auxiliary as in "gur git hurt," "he guh do wha' he guh do."
gut: a natural drain in the swamps, during the rainy season full of water. Every gut has a name, often known only to the Negroes.
he: he (regular); his; him, often used with self, as in *he'self.*
heap of, a: many.
helt: held. (Final "d" is often changed to "t.")
hisn, his'n: his.

'im: him.
is: used variably for *is, are, has,* etc., plural or singular; and often for *have* in interrogations.
jes: Just, just now. (Also pronounced *jist.*)
jue, jue-drop: dew, dew drop.
juty: duty.
kaze: because.
kin: can.
kiner: "kind of," rather, somewhat.
'lated: late.
leffen: leaving.
less: let; unless.
light out: to rush away or start running. (In past tense; *lit out.*)
'low: allow, allows.
luh: let.
l'um: let them.
mash: marsh.
Mensa: the origin of this name is unknown. Mensa is dead, but when he was alive he was the pride and terror of a wide district,—feared, loved, and respected. The author has never seen a finer human body. A regular Casanova.
nothen: nothing. (Also pronounced *nuttin'* and *nothin'.*)
nuse: use. (Either noun or verb.)
nusin': using.
ole field is a fire and de hawk is here: when an old field or a patch of woods is burning, the hawks gather and watch for refugee rabbits.
'oman, 'ooman: woman.
on: on (regular); of.
onrestless: restless.
pamelia: familiar; friendly.
perfanity: profanity. ("pro-" and "pre-" are often changed to "per-.")
persizely: precisely.
pizen: poison.
pizer: piazza, front porch.

purtty or *pritty:* pretty. The story of the "purtty little folks" was told the author by an old Negro mammy who was half Indian. He has never heard another Negro story about fairies. The spirit world of the Negro is usually one to be feared, full of goblins and ghosts.

'rest: arrest, arrested.

riffle: ripple.

rucas: a noisy row, an angry disturbance.

rudder: would rather, prefer.

sarchin': searching.

Scip: Pronounced "sip." The original Scip was a minister, but something of a skeptic and a fatalist.

scusin': except (possibly from "excuse"); accusing.

settin' up: a wake. When a Negro dies, his friends sit all night with the body.

set in de chair: Sit in the electric chair, be electrocuted.

sho' or *shore:* sure, surely.

'spicious: suspicious.

spile: spoil.

stirbance: (sometimes *sturbance*): disturbance.

'stress, 'stressful: distress, distressful.

strew: scatter unpleasant gossip about.

'stroy; struction: destroy, destruction.

suade: persuade.

Tad: Tad is a prince of story tellers, but his brother Napoleon was an emperor. No old or rehashed stories for Napoleon. He used to keep the darkies spellbound for hours at a time, reeling out by the camp fire tale after tale, always new and original. But Napoleon's stories died with him, for nobody thought to record them.

tater: A sweet potato or yam. This never means a white or Irish potato.

tech: touch.

teet': teeth.

tension: attention.

ter: to.

terrance: terror.

tes': test.

theu: through.
tonement: tournament.
tored out: rushed away, ran frantically away.
totes: carries.
tother: the other.
tried his self: did his best, put out extra effort.
trusty: a convict allowed more or less freedom of movement on his agreement not to escape. Often pronounced "trustee."
trute: truth.
turn: (*a turn er dem*): a considerable number, a pile, a bunch. An armful of wood is spoken of as "a turn of wood."
turn-over: a public disturbance, a noisy brawl.
tushes: tusks.
'um: them, those.
ur: of.
Un': uncle.
vigus (vīgus): fierce, powerful.
war: was, were.
wase up: waste.
we: us; also in regular sense.
weeked: wicked.
wey: where.
wha's de time?: A common salutation. Often answered by "Sorter slow" or "Time ain' so much." (Sometimes *wuh's de time?*)
whing: wing.
wid: with.
wrop: wrapped.
wuh (often *wha'*): what; who.
wuh fuh: what; why. A common phrase usually equivalent merely to *wuh.*)
wuss, wusser: worse, bad. *Wusser* is not necessarily a comparative, but may be; *wuss* may be comparative.
yaller belly: a variety of "coota" or fresh water turtle with a yellow belly.
year: ear.
yourownt: yours.

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